SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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GAY PRIDE
PUERTO RICO
GAY PRIDE
THE WALLPAPER STO
HOMES

WOMEN STRIKE FOR PEACE AND EQUALITY!
I'M NOT A BREEDER FOR THE MAN'S WAR
SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL - END THE WAR!
THE WOMEN OF VIETNAM ARE OUR SISTERS

same struggle

UAW ON STRIKE
COL
UAW ON STRIKE
UAW ON STRIKE INCREASED PENSIONS
UAW ON STRIKE
STRIKE

SAVE WAY
ONE WAY
CHECKS CASHED
M.H. CARSON & SON
MORTON N. NEUFELD
REAL ESTATE
CAR W
WE WON'T FIGHT ANOTHE
RICH MAN'S WAR!!!

SAME FIGHT

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WHY I JOINED SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

NO UNION FUNDS FOR PRO-WAR PARTIES

MAYA T., NYC

My path toward political activism began during my time as an undergraduate college student at Hamilton College. Because my college was built on the ancestral lands of the Oneida Nation, my early activism centered heavily on indigenous sovereignty and land rights. I was first brought into action on these struggles through calls for Hamilton College to stand in solidarity with local indigenous leadership by incorporating formal land acknowledgements and fighting to protect their spaces and legal rights.

This foundational experience in localized resistance ultimately laid the groundwork for a broader political awakening. In 2020, following the murder of George Floyd, my focus expanded from local indigenous solidarity campaigns to national systemic struggle, where I joined Black Lives Matter protests mobilizing around my campus. While I now understand that these struggles of the oppressed under capitalism are deeply connected, at the time, they still felt disparate.

This sense of fragmentation only intensified after the re-election of Donald Trump in 2024; his victory underscored how deeply entrenched social divisions are actively weaponized to keep the vast majority of people divided. Eventually, it became painfully clear to me that fighting these separate battles in isolation was a losing strategy that could never eradicate systemic oppression.

It was during this moment of political frustration and helplessness that I first encountered Socialist Alternative at a community table. Their messaging immediately resonated with me as they explicitly connected the dots between seemingly isolated struggles and their root cause: the capitalist system. I began to realize that this atomization of struggle—whether on the basis of race, gender identity, or sexual orientation—is in fact deliberate. These manufactured fractures act as an ideological tool used by the capitalist class to prevent the unification of the working class. By organizing with Socialist Alternative, I am no longer just reacting to individual struggle; I am actively building a mass movement capable of striking at the root of all oppression by dismantling the capitalist system. ✪

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Fight Trump & The Far Right

- The Democrats can't and won't stop Trump's agenda. Fight Trump and his billionaire government's far-right, authoritarian agenda with mass protests, walkouts, occupations, strikes, and a new working-class party.
- No scapegoating—it's the capitalist system that creates crises and suffering, not immigrants, transgender people, or any marginalized group. Build working-class solidarity and struggle to fight back against the capitalist class's divide and rule.

Work To Live, Not Live To Work

- Raise the federal minimum wage to $25/hr, adjusted annually for cost of living increases, as a step toward a living wage for all.
- 32 hour work week with no loss in pay or benefits (minimum $52,000/year). Share out the work with the unemployed and create new union jobs.
- A minimum guaranteed income of $4,000/month for the unemployed, disabled, and elderly, as well as for stay-at-home parents of children up to Pre-K or those unable to work.
- A guaranteed decent pension for all. No cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid—tax the rich to expand these crucial safety net programs.
- Combat the cost-of-living crisis—establish price controls on everyday goods.

Tax The Rich To Invest In Our Basic Needs

- Free, universal healthcare, paid sick leave, and cancellation of all medical debt.
- Take the pharmaceutical companies and for-profit hospitals into democratic public ownership to develop state-of-the-art treatments and provide high-quality care at no cost to patients.
- Fully fund and drastically expand addiction and mental health services.
- A massive expansion of high-quality, permanently affordable, publicly-owned housing where renters are legally protected from discrimination. Pass strong universal rent control and stop the criminalization of homelessness.
- Fully fund public education and end school privatization. Stop all right-wing attacks on education; for a national curriculum written in collaboration with teachers' unions, parents and students, based on the scientific method and an uncensored version of history.
- Cancel all student debt. Make all public college tuition-free.
- Eliminate gun violence—massive investment in jobs programs, after-school programs, and recreation centers as a starting point, combined with basic gun control policies.

Fight All Oppression

- Fight racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and all forms of oppression with working-class solidarity and struggle. Build a mass, multiracial, multi-gender movement against systemic oppression and capitalism.
- Equal rights for all, including equal pay for equal work. End all harassment, discrimination, and violence against women, LGBTQ people, Black people, immigrants, disabled people, and all marginalized groups.
- End the institutional racism of the criminal justice system, the racist "war on drugs," and mass incarceration. Invest in rehabilitation, job training, and living-wage jobs, not prisons. End low-paid prison labor, which is modern-day slavery. Abolish the death penalty.
- Arrest and convict killer cops. Immediately fire all police officers with a history of brutality and racist behavior. Demilitarize the police. Put all police departments under the control of democratically-elected civilian boards with the power to hire, fire, subpoena, and set budget priorities.
- No more voter registration—automatic voting rights for all.
- Defend the right to choose whether and when to have children. Free contraception as part of a broad program for reproductive health including comprehensive, LGBTQ-inclusive sex education.
- Free, safe, legal, and accessible abortion. Stop all right-wing attempts to criminalize abortion.
- Paid parental leave for 18 months and free, high-quality childcare and preschool for all.
- Full legal rights for all queer people, including the right to self-identify and express one's gender freely. Free, gender-affirming universal healthcare.

Defend Immigrants' Rights

- Abolish ICE. No immigrant detentions or deportations. Immediate, unconditional legalization and equal rights for all undocumented immigrants, regardless of their job status.
- No to capitalist divide-and-rule. Unions must lead the way in uniting immigrants and US-born workers, organizing all workers and forming deportation defense committees in every workplace.
- Build a movement against the destructive policies of US imperialism around the world that drive working-class people to flee their home countries.

End All Imperialist War

- Fight the rich, not their wars—build a massive, international anti-war movement.
- End the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. The right to self-determination of all nationalities, with guaranteed rights for ethnic, religious, and national minorities. End the occupation and siege of all Palestinian territories.
- Abolish NATO and all imperialist alliances. Stop the military build-up between the two blocs led by US and Chinese imperialism, and oppose the ramping up of nationalism around the world.
- Drastically cut the bloated US military budget and redirect that money toward free universal healthcare, public education, and high-quality affordable housing for all.
- Capitalism breeds imperialism, plunging the world into devastating wars. Only international socialism can bring about lasting peace.

Rebuild Fighting Unions

- We need unions that fight the bosses and their parties with tactics like strikes, mass demonstrations, and open defiance of anti-union laws. Fighting unions should be democratically controlled by their memberships.
- Not another dime of union money to either party of big business—Democrat or Republican. Spend the millions now spent on corporate political campaigns to launch massive drives to organize non-union workers across the US, and run independent, pro-working class candidates.
- Union leaders must accept the average wage of the workers they represent.
- Reject both capitalist "free trade" policies and "America first" protectionism. US workers have more in common with workers around the globe than we do with the bosses at home.
- End anti-union "right to work" and "open-shop" legislation. Implement simple majority card check for all unionization drives.
- Unions need to fight all manifestations of racism, xenophobia, sexism, queerphobia, and all forms of discrimination and oppression. The unions should organize mass non-compliance, strikes, and walkouts against right-wing attacks.

End Climate Catastrophe

- Ban new oil and gas drilling and take the top 100 polluting companies into democratic public ownership. Implement a democratically planned, just transition to 100% renewable energy as part of an international plan.
- A massive, unionized green jobs program. Give all workers in polluting industries the option of a union job rapidly building and operating green infrastructure with no loss in pay, benefits, or seniority.
- Fully-funded emergency systems to protect and evacuate people from the more frequent and severe storms, floods, and fires caused by climate change. High-quality housing and assistance for those displaced or otherwise affected.

Build A New Mass Workers' Party

- No votes or donations to any Democrats or Republicans—the labor movement and social movements must build a new, anti-war, working-class party.
- Unite this new workers' party around a common program, developed through democratic debate and discussion in every workplace, school, and community. It should take no corporate donations, no money from billionaires, and have a socialist program.
- All elected officials to make no more than the average wage of their constituents.

Revolutionary Socialism & Internationalism

- Capitalism produces poverty, oppression, environmental destruction, pandemics, and war. We need an international working-class revolution against this failed system.
- Take the top 500 corporations and banks that dominate the US economy into democratic public ownership. Run them under the democratic management of elected representatives of workers and the broader public.
- A democratic and socialist plan for the economy based on the common interests of working people and youth everywhere—for a socialist United States and a socialist world.

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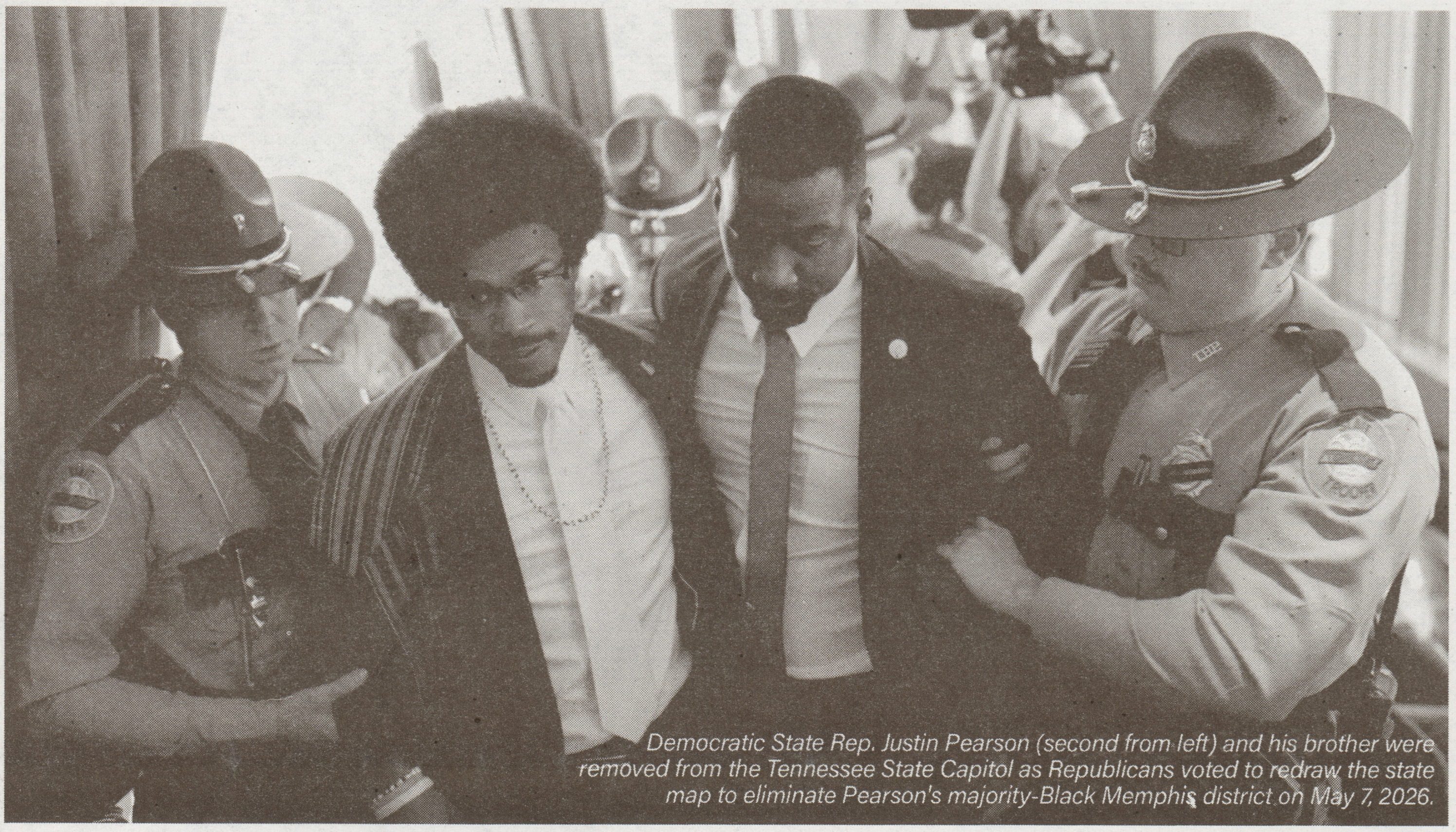
NO JIM CROW 2.0

BUILD A NEW CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

ERIC JENKINS, PHILADELPHIA



Democratic State Rep. Justin Pearson (second from left) and his brother were removed from the Tennessee State Capitol as Republicans voted to redraw the state map to eliminate Pearson's majority-Black Memphis district on May 7, 2026.

The Supreme Court's decision to gut the Voting Rights Act (VRA) has unleashed a torrent of racist voter suppression efforts in state after state. Republicans across the South are now racing to disenfranchise millions of Black voters, ahead of the midterm elections. Tennessee has already eliminated its only majority-Black district, with Alabama and Louisiana likely to slash more soon.

Trump is the driving force behind this charge, demanding action from Republican lawmakers and pressuring and punishing those who don't comply. He's flagging in the polls, and this redistricting campaign is key to his hopes of rigging the midterms for Republicans.

But it's about more than that. Trump's gutting of the VRA is a watershed moment for the right wing. It's the latest rollback of a key victory of the Civil Rights era, won through the blood, sweat, and tears of mass struggle.

The Supreme Court has once again shown its rotten, undemocratic role in society as they justify racist and sexist attacks across the country. Any concessions working people get from the courts will always be clawed back unless there is relentless working-class struggle to stop them.

Meanwhile, the Democrats are proving useless yet again as Trump's attacks on Black people and the oppressed escalate tenfold.

Democrats Watch Voting Rights Die

The Democrats have just embarrassed themselves in front of millions. Their counteroffensive hinged on gerrymandering Virginia to snatch four House seats, but after burning $64 million to win a referendum on a new congressional map, both the Virginia and US Supreme Courts threw it all out. The Democrats' reaction was apoplectic, with one strategist saying: "How many millions are we spending on this when the DNC is in debt and we have 40 frontline races to win?"

But many leading Democrats want to double down. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said the Democrats will launch "maximum warfare" and a "massive Democratic redistricting counteroffensive." As usual, the Democrats resort to lawsuits, backroom deals, and gerrymandering. By making this the front line of their fight against Trump, they don't have to campaign on the things working people need like free healthcare or a $25/hour minimum wage.

The Democratic Party didn't want this to happen, but they're perfectly happy to lower the bar on what they're fighting for. The main thing they campaign on is being against the Republicans, and they can use these attacks on voting rights to raise the urgency of this midterm election—without having to deliver anything if they win. Their priority is to maintain US capitalism's status quo.

In fact, the Democrats have always been at the forefront of sabotaging working-class movements. South Carolina Congressman Jim Clyburn used his profile among Black communities to help crush both of Bernie Sanders' presidential campaigns, arguing against Medicare For All and supporting Clinton and Biden. During the George Floyd Rebellion, the Democrats pointed to Biden and the 2020 election as the next step, rather than organizing a mass working-class movement against systemic racism, and they fiercely argued against defunding the police. They rely so deeply on voters choosing the "lesser evil" that they've even donated to far-right Trump Republicans, thinking they could easily beat them! The movement for democratic rights must reject this logic because it's the opposite of the struggle-based methods —like those of the Civil Rights Movement—that can actually win victories.

Very few in the Democratic Party actually draw on the fighting legacy of the Civil Rights Movement. Justin Pearson, a young, relatively new Tennessee State Representative has spoken fiercely in the halls of power for Black working people, and was recently thrown out of the chamber for protesting Tennessee's elimination of its only majority-Black congressional district. It wasn't his first time, having been expelled from the state legislature in 2023 for protesting gun reform before winning back his seat. He's even connected the fight against racism with a need to build a fight against the billionaires. However, ultimately the Democrats will leave Pearson out to dry. A fighting political approach in the halls of power requires a brand new political party, based on the power of the working class and mass movements.

Trump is evil, but the Democrats are opportunists, banking solely on working people suffering under him in order to regain power. They won't build a movement capable of defending the Voting Rights Act. The only thing the Democrats care about defending is the blue color of these now-destroyed districts. What Marxists defend is not Democratic Party control, but the hard-fought right to political representation for racially oppressed minorities and mass united struggle for a pro-working class program.

Why Marxists Fight For Democratic Rights

US democracy was designed from the get-go to ensure the political system does the bidding of the capitalists. We see evidence of this everywhere: billionaires pouring millions of dollars into campaigns, industries promising politicians guaranteed corporate jobs, and the list goes on.

The right to vote had to be fought for by dynamic mass movements using strikes, occupations, and mass protests over decades. The US ruling class was reluctant to make these concessions, but it needed to. The capitalist class has an interest in making its system appear just democratic enough to stave off mass revolt.

Even so, US democracy is openly seen as rotten by a majority of working people. More than half of Americans don't even vote. If we know that our rights, including the gains of the VRA, are only partial in this rotten system, why fight for them at all?

Most working people see democratic rights —freedom of speech, the freedom to assemble, the right to vote, and more—as basic freedoms they should have and, crucially, as things worth struggling for. For Marxists, these are not just human rights but a means by which working people can act collectively as a political force—we fight for the best possible conditions to build a multi-racial, working class movement. The struggle needed to win democratic rights can often inspire working people to go further to fight for deeper systemic change.

The Civil Rights movement is a key example. Millions of working people, youth, socialists, and union members fought in a joint struggle for basic democratic rights and racial equality. It quickly became more, since Black working people still suffered from unfair housing, job discrimination, and unenforced civil rights. The Vietnam War made it clear that Black people were seen as fodder for the US imperialist war machine.

Malcolm X said it best, arguing for full systemic change: "If you stick a knife in my back nine inches and pull it out six inches, there's no progress. If you pull it all the way out, that's not progress. Progress is healing the wound that the blow made. And they haven't even pulled the knife out, much less heal the wound."

Next Steps

Republicans are leading an outright war on Black voters across the South, and all the Democrats can do is insist we vote them into office. While the Democrats may very well still win control of the House, which would see millions breathe an understandable sigh of relief, it's clear that they can't and won't stop Trump's existential attacks.

We need to urgently learn from the past and build an independent multiracial working-class movement that fights unapologetically for Black liberation and the socialist transformation of society. ✪

IRAN WAR: DEAL OR NO DEAL, THE WORLD IS IN CRISIS

ANNA BARNETT, PHILADELPHIA

After five weeks of all-out war on Iran and seven weeks of a very fragile ceasefire, yet another round of talks is taking place between the US and Iran. Whether the result is a deal or a new round of war (or yet more limbo) is still an open question. Even if a deal does pan out, it will likely be linked to an agreement to continue further negotiations, which are bound to be fraught with complications.

What is certain, however, is that the world has changed through the course of this war, and that lasting stability in the Middle East or globally is not in the cards. The war on Iran has opened up a new phase of difficulties for the Trump regime and further undermined US imperialism on the world stage. Even if the war ends soon, its impacts will continue to radiate across every corner of the world.

Will There Be a Deal?

The deal appears to be in serious trouble before it has even come into existence, with new US strikes on Southern Iran and an Israeli offensive in Lebanon.

If talks fail, the prospect of a return to full-scale war on Iran is not ruled out. However, despite the complications of reaching a deal, military escalation is not a particularly attractive option for Trump either, especially when there is far from any guarantee of success. Despite Trump's chest-thumping, reports have now revealed that 30 of Iran's 33 missile sites along the Strait of Hormuz remain functional. Up to this point, the Iranian regime has managed to endure the pain inflicted by the US and its allies and retains the upper hand.

At the time of writing, there are reports that an agreement would be based on a reopening of the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for the unfreezing of Iranian assets and lifting of sanctions. According to US sources, this is paired with an agreement from Iran to get rid of its highly enriched uranium stores, with details to be ironed out in the next 60 days. This is apparently denied by the Iranian side who have, in general, downplayed the imminence of an agreement.

After so many rounds of talks and at least $25 billion spent on the war, the fact that these terms are at best a return to the pre-war status quo exposes how weak the US position is.

> ***The prospect of any real return to "normal" is a pipe dream.***

Global Impacts

The war has upended world politics and alliances in a way that cannot simply be reversed. Heads of state in Germany, Italy, Spain, and others, are further publicly distancing themselves from Trump and the US's war. One key question will be the impact of any deal on Israel's devastating war on Lebanon. Netanyahu, seemingly iced out of direct negotiations, intends to "enhance the blows" and "intensify the force" against Hezbollah, despite the so-called ceasefire. Meanwhile, the Israeli state has stepped up attacks and expanded military control to 60% of Gaza, and Trump's farcical "peace" plan has only led to escalated suffering for the Palestinians. In the West Bank, settler violence is reaching a fever pitch.

Trump has also made the request (met with awkward silence) that allies in the region sign onto the Abraham Accords, normalizing relations with Israel, as part of any deal to end the war. This would be hugely provocative to the masses of those countries—who feel overwhelming solidarity with the Palestinian people—and extremely politically risky for these autocratic regimes.

The recent meeting between Trump and Xi Jinping took place in the shadow of the Iran war, which Trump had hoped would be over by the time of this meeting. The US hoped to enlist China in pressuring Iran to negotiate, but the meeting produced no concrete commitments on the war. While the summit has been framed as a detente between the two rivals, this is only a product of the weak positions of both sides. The US-China inter-imperialist rivalry is in no way defused.

Trump's Mess at Home

The Trump regime is also facing deepening problems domestically. Approval ratings for Trump's second term have hit a record low, with particular frustration bubbling around the economic fallout of the war. While Trump still has a tight hold on the party, exemplified by recent primary election victories for Trump loyalists, noticeable cracks are opening up even within the hardened Trump base.

Divisions have deepened in the Republican Party, especially over the war in Iran. Yet another vote on the War Powers Resolution, which would require congressional approval for the Iran war, was scheduled, but then hastily canceled, after it became clear that the Republicans didn't have enough votes to defeat it. On the other side, Trump is under fire from more hawkish Republicans like Ted Cruz and Lindsey Graham over the prospect of an Iran deal.

Will A Deal Mean A Return To Normal?

The prospect of any real return to "normal" is a pipe dream. The destruction left behind in the Middle East, in particular of human life and infrastructure in Lebanon and Iran, will be felt for decades to come.

The war has caused damage to energy infrastructure which will take years to repair. OPEC's oil production has dropped by nearly 30%, and it is expected to take months to return to pre-war levels. Restarting this will not be as simple as turning the tap back on, and prices will not drop dramatically in the short term.

Re-opening the Strait itself is also not purely a question of whether there is a formal ceasefire. Analysts predict that a return to previous transit capacity for tankers in the Strait could take around three months. Mines that were laid will need to be removed.

The shock in the energy industry will radiate out to manufacturing and continue to push the price of goods up. The shortage of fertilizer impacts farming and food prices. Inflation, paired with slow or no growth in the economy, raises the prospect of stagflation. Even if the war ends tomorrow, the damage to the world economy can't just be wiped away.

We Won't Pay for Your Wars

This war has been a disaster and an embarrassment for US imperialism. But while Trump is desperately searching for an off-ramp from Iran, the US imperialist war machine will not just take their ball and go home. They will continue to ramp up their campaign of militarism and prepare for future conflicts.

Those who have positioned themselves as an opposition to Trump—for example, the corporate Democratic Party and some NATO powers—will also double down on a militarist agenda, despite wrapping it up in rhetoric about defense. The Islamist dictatorship in Iran, which brutalized its own protesters earlier this year, offers no alternative for workers and the oppressed. Chinese imperialism, while it may try to paint itself as the friendlier, more diplomatic power in the inter-imperialist conflict, has been watching closely and will continue to pursue its own imperialist interests.

Working-class and poor people are bearing the brunt of this war and its economic impacts. The neo-colonial world has been particularly hard hit. Strikes and protests emerged in the Philippines, and India, and then recently in Kenya, Mozambique, and Comoros, as well as in Ireland, with transport strikes and mass protests. Workers and the poor around the world have common interests against the warmongers who are driving the world into crisis. There is an urgent need for mass, international struggle against war and militarism, linked to the fight against the cost of living crisis. ✪

COST OF LIVING BLEEDS US DRY

BIA LACOMBE, SEATTLE

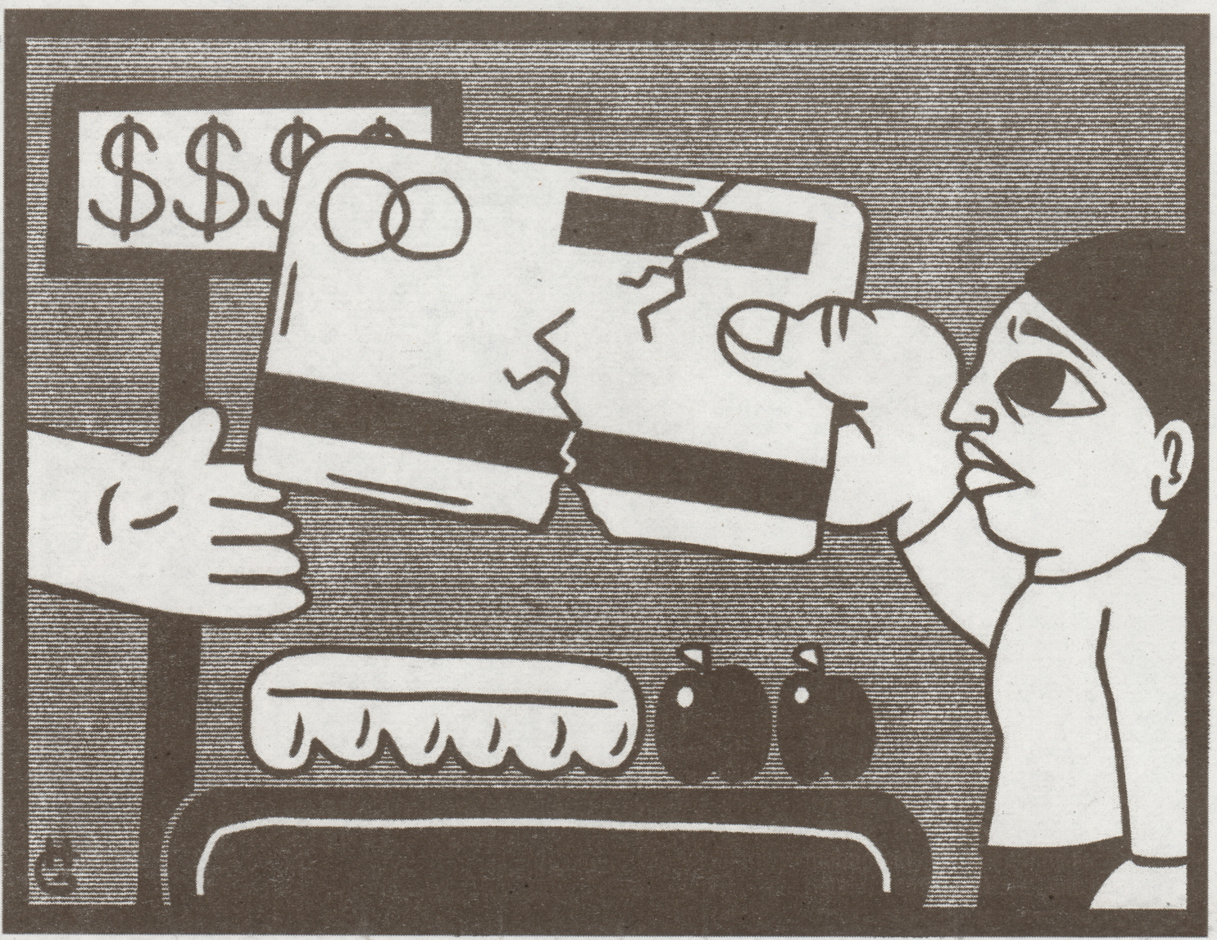
You know it's a crisis when more than half of people in the US are going into credit card debt to pay for essential living expenses like rent and utilities. When retirees are tapping into their retirement savings to buy groceries. When more than 36 million people in the US have reported stealing from self-checkout kiosks because of price increases—and that's just those who admit to it.

If that wasn't enough, healthcare and childcare costs are through the roof: the lowest-cost Silver health plan on the Affordable Care Act Marketplace has risen 77% since 2017. Electricity costs have gone up 39% since 2021, and they'll only go up even more if the thousands of proposed new AI data centers across the country aren't stopped in their tracks.

Even if the Strait of Hormuz is fully opened soon, which there is no guarantee of, many economists say these higher prices driven by the rising price of oil will likely last months or even years.

So on May 12, when gas topped $4.50/gallon and inflation hit its highest level since 2023, and Trump said to a reporter, "I don't think about Americans' financial situation," everyone collectively thought, "Tell us something we don't know." Millions of people voted for Trump because he promised to do something about affordability, and now many of them are increasingly getting tired of playing "two truths and a lie" with the president—a recent CNN poll found that Trump's disapproval rating on the economy has hit 70%.

A big part of why the economy hasn't crashed into a recession by now is because the wealthy, like Trump and his billionaire friends, are spending the money they've gotten as profits from our labor, making big bets on the AI boom, and going into massive debt to finance it. The top 10% of US households now account for nearly half of all spending, according to Moody's Analytics, which is the highest share since the late 1980s. From 1979 to 2025, the incomes of the top 1% increased by almost 200%, while our wages only increased 33%—the rich have so much money to burn because they took it right out of our paychecks.



Hannah Fitzgerald, IG: @misterbananawoman

What's The Solution?

If you ask the Democratic Party, the answer is putting them back in office. They're rebranding as the party of affordability, with proposals to make things like prescription drugs, childcare, utilities, groceries, and housing cheaper.

But... it's not like the cost of living wasn't a problem when Biden and Obama each had multiple years of their presidencies where the Democrats had control of both houses of Congress. Biden and the Democrats in 2020 promised everything under the sun in order to get elected, from student loan forgiveness to raising the minimum wage, and even a public option for healthcare and free public college. None of it ever happened.

The reason neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have ever passed any of this stuff before, and the reason they certainly won't now, is that the billionaires and big corporations are in the drivers' seat. And the only thing that has ever forced the ruling class to relinquish some of their profits as concessions to workers is not clever negotiations in Congress—only mass movements actually scare them.

To make any dent in the cost-of-living crisis, workers across the country need to build sustained, coordinated mass action like strikes and walkouts, in addition to protests. We need what May Day this year could have been if the leadership of the major unions had actually used their massive resources to build for it: a nationwide general strike that shuts down business as usual and reminds the bosses of who actually makes all of their profits.

We need to be demanding significant pay increases, rent freezes, and a minimum wage of at least $25/hour. We need a government that would immediately take the giant energy corporations and major grocery chains into democratic public ownership, cutting our utility bills to actually affordable levels. We need to abolish the parasitic health insurance companies and tax the rich to fund free, universal healthcare.

The fight for all of these things also needs to be combined with building a huge, international movement against war and military spending, rooted in our workplaces and schools. In order to make this fight the strongest one possible, our unions and our movements need to break from both corporate parties, and instead get organized on the basis of the strength of the independent working class as the only force capable of changing society. We need to build an independent, working-class party, with a socialist program, that will mobilize mass movements in our communities and link them up across the country.

The whole capitalist system that keeps the billionaires in charge is the reason we're in this mess in the first place. As long as they stay in charge, any victories we win will inevitably be rolled back. That's why we fight for a socialist society, where the working class can rationally organize the vast resources of this planet in a way that makes sense for all of us, not just a few at the top. We need everyone to play a role in that struggle—join us today. ✪

"Going Grey": Shipbuilders Must Oppose War

JACOB RIEDEL, PHILADELPHIA

Jacob is a member of Boilermakers Local 19, writing in a personal capacity.

When billionaires wage imperialist wars, there are no winners among the working class. I took up employment as a union shipbuilding apprentice two years ago, honing my skills constructing maritime training vessels, dredging vessels, and cargo ships. In late 2024 though, Hanwha Ocean, a major shipbuilder with a significant defense arm, purchased the yard and later committed $5 billion to expand capacity as part of Trump's tariff deal with South Korea. Sure enough, in April, the shipyard announced its first military contract, a vessel designed to re-fuel, re-supply, and re-arm combat vessels. In shipbuilding, it's called "going grey" when a company begins building for the military, a reference to the grey color of military vessels—and many of us workers don't want it.

Hanwha is investing $140 billion in US manufacturing, which, with the continued worldwide escalation of war, is sure to mean expanding military manufacturing. So far they also have plans for a munitions plant in Arkansas.

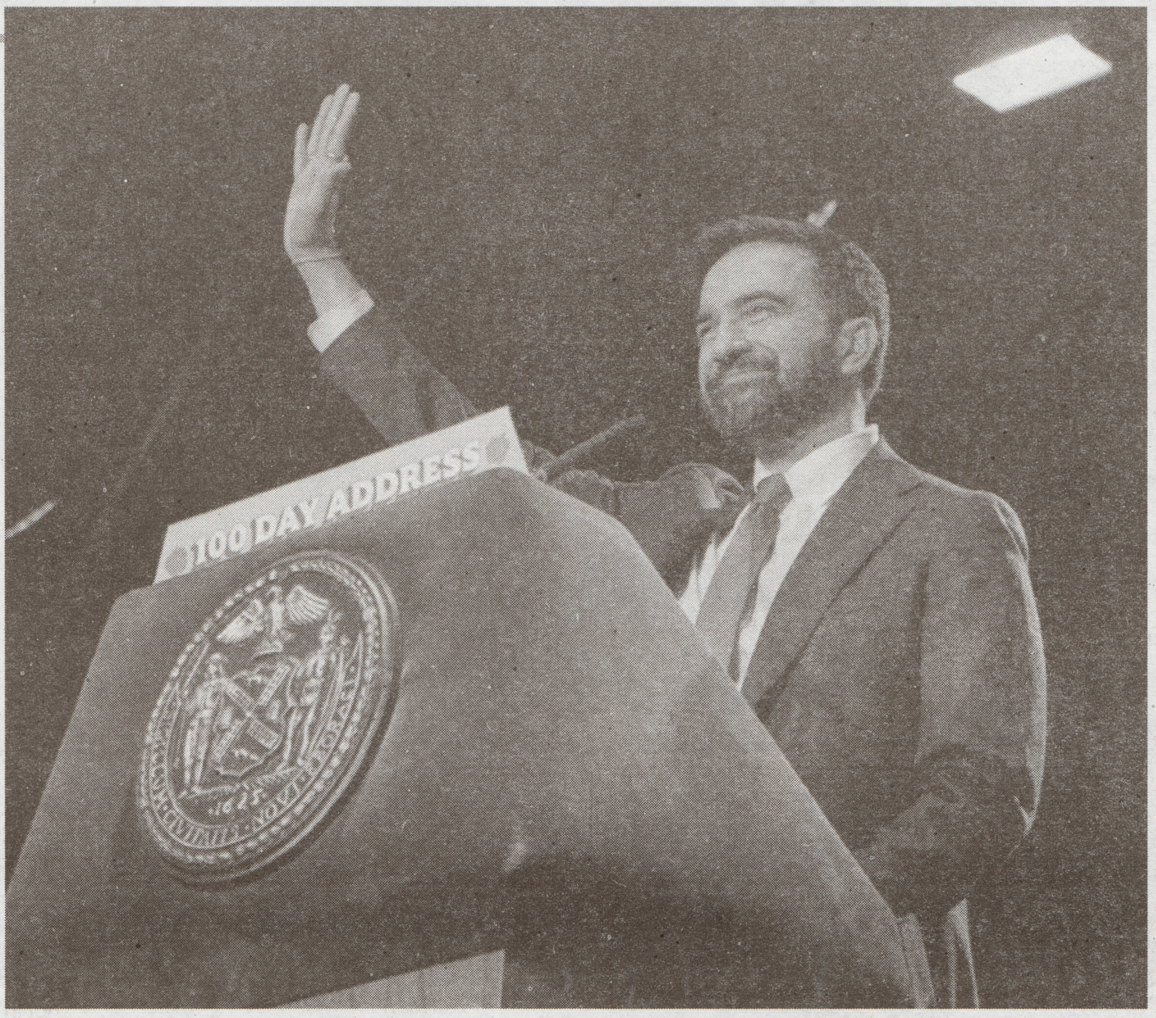
While some coworkers rejoiced at the yard's new ownership, which came with several new contracts and a near-guarantee of steady employment for some time, others have deep reservations. My coworkers and I absolutely need work. And the world needs more ships for installing wind turbines, moving people and goods, and providing other services that make our societies function. What we do not need is to support war efforts that don't serve the needs of working people.

Under capitalism, it always seems like we're at the mercy of our bosses. But as part of a union, we have a collective voice. The union should decisively reject "going grey" and demand civilian-only contracts. Unfortunately, union leadership is likely to resist this, focusing instead on the jobs Hanwha promises and avoiding conflict at all costs. This ignores the annihilation of workers and the environment abroad, and the price we pay for war at home.

Solidarity means recognizing that the workers of Cuba, Iran, Palestine and so forth have far more in common with us than the bosses who profit. The labor movement must take action accordingly, or risk weakening the global working class against the oppressive capitalist classes. As military infrastructure in the US expands, those of us working in the field are uniquely positioned to organize strikes, workplace actions, and other efforts to bring the war machine to a grinding halt. This begins with anti-war industrial workers like us, across the country, making the case to our coworkers to fight for our unions to oppose the drive towards war [See back page for template anti-war union resolution!]. ✪

ZOHRAN MAMDANI: FIVE MONTHS IN OFFICE

JESSE SHUSSETT, NYC



When running for mayor, Zohran focused intensely on an affordability agenda that electrified a massive layer of working-class New Yorkers and inspired working people all over the country and the world. His flagship campaign promises were a rent freeze on rent-stabilized apartments, fast and free buses, free universal childcare, and city-owned at-cost grocery stores. This agenda was to be paid for by taxing the rich, a proposal which was both his most popular among voters and also the terror of the city's elite.

On Tax Day, in a viral video, Zohran announced he was taxing the rich—specifically, via a property tax on luxury secondary homes owned by non-full-time NYC residents. Perhaps surprisingly, he did this with the help of establishment Democratic Governor Kathy Hochul, who, during his campaign, insisted she would not tax the rich. But on closer inspection, it's not so shocking. Former establishment governor and Hochul's previous ally, Andrew Cuomo, endorsed this policy in 2019, before shutting it down under pressure from the rich. In short, to corporate Democrats, it's a tolerable concession.

During his campaign, Socialist Alternative wrote that to win his platform, Zohran should be an "organizer-in-chief"—helping to build a mass movement to squeeze concessions from the establishment—not a "negotiator-in-chief." The improvements to the lives of working New Yorkers thus far are positive. But still, Zohran has come up against serious limits put upon him by the establishment of the Democratic Party, a thoroughly corporate institution. That's why we have to reiterate our urgent call to start building a mass movement of working people right now.

Accomplishments So Far

The bulk of Zohran's achievements has been a slew of basic improvements to everyday life in the city such as filling potholes, fixing bike lanes, rolling out rat-proof trash cans, and announcing the first city-owned grocery store, slated to open in East Harlem next year. These are all positive moves, but they fall short of the far-reaching reforms he campaigned on to tackle NYC's affordability crisis.

Zohran drew wide acclaim recently for claiming to balance NYC's $125 billion budget without slashing services or raising property taxes. Even if the proposed budget passes, much of it won't be sustainable—the city plans to freeze the hiring of thousands of educators and delay contributions for city workers' pensions, raising opposition from labor unions. But the bulk of the deficit was plugged with state aid, and only a small portion—$500 million—is expected to come from the new tax on the rich—and that's assuming the rich don't exploit any loopholes. This also limits Zohran's affordability agenda.

For instance, in March, Zohran announced a program called 2-K, which establishes 2,000 free childcare seats for two-year-olds around the city. The first two years of this pilot program will be covered by state funding, touted as a sign of partnership between Zohran and Governor Hochul. But beyond these two years, and to fully expand childcare for ages two to five, much more funding will be needed. Ultimately, the only source to fund sorely needed, expanded social services comes from the massive profits of big business.

Lean On The Working Class, Not The Establishment

Facing immense resistance from the super rich, Zohran had two choices when he got into office: either help to build an independent movement based on working-class power or rely on deals and favors with the establishment. He has clearly chosen the latter, as exemplified by his endorsement of Hochul for an additional term as governor, returning the favor after excitedly accepting her endorsement in the mayoral election. Few would contest that this decision was purely pragmatic, aimed at cultivating a relationship with the governor to reduce resistance to his agenda.

This kind of politicking is disorienting and damaging to the workers' movement—for instance, this decision came on the heels of Hochul's facilitation of strikebreaking when 15,000 nurses across the city walked out for a month to fight for safer working conditions. Zohran also made his priorities completely clear when he distanced himself from the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and the "Tax the Rich" movement by skipping the campaign's main protests in Albany, telling organizers he didn't want to antagonize Governor Hochul.

Ultimately, the only source to fund sorely-needed, expanded social services comes from the massive profits of big business.

Zohran's endorsement also cut across the progressive run of Antonio Delgado and his running mate India Walton, who, like Zohran, is a member of DSA, making his endorsement of the establishment option even worse. Zohran explained his endorsement as part of a necessary partnership between the left and establishment wings of the Democratic Party: "At its best, the Democratic Party has been a big tent not because it avoids conflict but because it channels conflict toward progress." However, for tens of millions of working people nationwide, the Democrats have not channeled anything towards progress, but towards war, poverty, and corruption. It is exactly a conflict with the establishment that is necessary. As a first step, the left needs to break from it, not endorse it.

Role Of DSA

DSA was a driving force behind Zohran's electoral victory, which led to the doubling of the NYC chapter since November and the organization hitting 100,000 members nationwide. But unfortunately, so far, DSA's leadership has declined to truly hold Zohran accountable, instead opting to "let him cook" while hoping to replicate his success by focusing their attention on more Democratic electoral campaigns.

This strategy reflects a fundamental difference between Socialist Alternative and DSA—we call for a clean break from the Democrats and for a new party of working people, whereas DSA is overwhelmingly focused on "fixing" the Democratic Party—something that just can't be done given its ties to and reliance on the billionaire class. During Zohran's campaign, Socialist Alternative warned that his run within the Democratic Party would trap him and the movement behind him, and the only way to challenge the power of Wall Street is through building a mass working-class movement independent from both the Democrats and the Republicans.

DSA still has an important role to play in this, and the "Tax the Rich" campaign, which Socialist Alternative members are active in, shows this potential. This will require broadening the movement further alongside unions and working people looking to fight for Zohran's platform, fully breaking with the Democrats, running independent socialist candidates, and switching from a strategy of lobbying the Democrats and building their left wing to one that puts the fight against them front and center.

What Next For NYC?

Despite the positive, but limited, reforms that have been announced, the major battles are still ahead of us. A sizable movement from below can push Zohran further to the left through mass action and organization across the city. The space for left-wing and socialist ideas is wide open, especially amid Trump's wars on working people.

As we wrote when Zohran won, even with the best intentions by an elected working-class representative, "the decisive factor for whether ordinary people win victories or suffer defeats is not who's in office, but the power of our movement." The political establishment won't be satisfied with Zohran's endorsement of Hochul alone and will continue to demand that the interests of their billionaire backers are prioritized. This raises the urgency of building an independent working-class alternative to the Democratic Party—on the streets, workplaces, campuses, and at the polls. ✪

THE PANTHERS, THEIR LIMITS & WHERE POWER ACTUALLY LIVES

FREE HUEY
FREE HUEY

RYAN WATSON, CHICAGO

Across the country, struggle is building against ICE raids, mass deportations, war, and the Trump administration's assault on working people. We face a wave of attacks—from the assault on trans people's right to exist, to the racist gutting of the Voting Rights Act. None of these are separate struggles. They are different fronts of the same fight. In that context, a growing layer of activists and organizers are turning to the history of the Black Panther Party, not out of nostalgia, but out of necessity.

That impulse is right. But inspiration is not the same thing as strategy. It is important to examine this history honestly, to learn not only what the Panthers got right, but where they hit walls, and what those lessons mean for building real power today.

Neighborhood Patrols

The Black Panther Party (BPP) was founded in Oakland in 1966, and their open-carry police patrols captured the imagination of a generation of young Black people. The Panthers would follow police in Black neighborhoods, legally armed and organized, reading out the rights of those stopped by cops. It was a direct, visible challenge to the daily terror of policing, and it spread rapidly.

Ronald Reagan, then governor of California, moved almost immediately to restrict open-carry in response. Notoriety made the party a target, and COINTELPRO cracked down hard. This is a critical lesson: the state is not an impartial referee. It is a tool of the ruling class, and when working people begin to organize power for themselves, the ruling class uses it accordingly.

BPP co-founder Huey Newton himself acknowledged that the guns and the uniforms, the black berets and leather jackets, while electrifying to some, alienated other sections of Black America who were not yet ready for that kind of confrontation with the state, or who feared the reprisals it would bring down on their communities.

"Survival Pending Revolution"

The Panthers' community survival programs—free breakfast for children, health clinics, liberation schools, and more—remain among the most celebrated parts of their legacy. But it is crucial to understand how the Panthers themselves thought about these programs. They did not call them "mutual aid." They called them "survival pending revolution."

The idea was straightforward: these programs would help people survive in the immediate moment, but they were not liberatory in themselves. They were a bridge—a way to build trust with the community, demonstrate what organized people can provide, and win people to the longer fight. The goal was always revolution, and the survival programs were organized in service of that goal.

But those programs consumed enormous resources. They relied heavily and disproportionately on the labor of Black women in the party, whose contributions have often been underacknowledged. Running large-scale community programs meant the organization wasn't able to lead larger political campaigns. But the alternative, of reducing the strategy to armed confrontation, would have led to deeper isolation.

What was needed was a strategy that connects immediate struggle to mass collective action. That's why Marxists use what we call a "transitional approach," building a bridge linking the immediate needs of ordinary people (such as better wages or affordable housing) with the necessity for socialist revolution. Crucially, we do this by calling for class struggle tactics to be taken up in a mass movement of working people and the oppressed.

Socialism & Internationalism

The Panthers saw themselves as part of a global anti-colonial and anti-capitalist struggle. They expressed solidarity with liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and they explicitly identified the enemy as capitalism, not just individual racist cops or politicians.

These politics resonated so broadly because of the objective crisis of capitalism at the time, much like today: the escalating Vietnam War, stagnant wages, crumbling urban infrastructure, and the visible failure of liberal reform to address the conditions of Black working-class life after the civil rights victories. The system's inability to deliver created the conditions for a more radical politics to take root.

But the party's engagement with what they perceived to be socialist states and organizations, particularly those influenced by Stalinism and Maoism, proved damaging. These forces often offered rhetorical solidarity, but related to the Panthers more in service of their geopolitical conflict with the US than in support of the struggle to build independent, democratic working-class power. And crucially, the Panthers were not part of an international socialist organization, one rooted in genuine working-class democracy rather than top-down party discipline.

Centrality Of The Working Class

The Panthers organized heavily among the most dispossessed: people pushed out of the formal economy, the unemployed, those with the least to lose. That population can fight hard, and they did. But those layers of the class alone are not in a position to stop how capitalism actually runs, which is through production and profit.

The Panthers' limited roots among Black workers in key industries meant they lacked the economic leverage to seriously threaten the system. When COINTELPRO came down, there was no broad network of organized workers who could push back through strikes or collective action.

Today's choke points are logistics hubs, warehouses, and transit systems. Black and immigrant workers are concentrated in many of these sectors. Organized alongside the broader multiracial working class, they have the power to shake and disrupt the whole capitalist system.

Legacy Of The Panthers

The Panthers showed us confrontation and pride. They showed us that the working class and oppressed do not have to accept state violence passively. They showed us that Black struggle is inseparable from the struggle against capitalism internationally.

But they also showed us that a small, self-described vanguard party, disconnected from mass organization, cannot carry a revolution.

The Panthers' legacy must be developed further. The goal is not to recreate 1966. It is to take the courage and clarity of that era and combine it with patient, rooted mass organizing in the broader working class, where capital reproduces itself every single day. That's where power is built. That's where the system can be disrupted.

Minnesota's general strike against ICE earlier this year shows that. Through mass working-class action, Black liberation becomes possible—to the benefit of our entire class. ✪

Follow us for more analysis on the fight for racial justice and against capitalism:

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NATIONAL ZOOM MEETING

NO JIM CROW 2.0

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM CIVIL RIGHTS & BLACK POWER

SAT JUN 27 @ 3 PM ET

@blackcaucus_socialistalt

WHEN TRANS RIGHTS

STONEWALL MEANS
FIGHT BACK! SMAS
GAY OPPRESSION
GAY CAUCUS–YOUTH AGAINST

RACHEL WILDER, PHILADELPHIA

Trump and the far right are turning back the clock on LGBTQ rights. Last Pride month, the Supreme Court celebrated with a 6-3 decision on* US v. Skrmetti*, which upheld a Tennessee ban on gender-affirming healthcare for minors. Then this March, a federal court ruled that states can ban Medicaid from covering this life-saving care for trans adults as well, a horrifying extension of the precedent set by* Skrmetti*. Legislators have considered hundreds of anti-trans bills every year for the past three years. This year is on track to continue that trend, which started under Biden.

It's not a coincidence Trump and the right wing are spending so much energy attacking trans people, who make up less than 1% of the population. Trump has no solutions for the cost-of-living or unemployment crises, and his war in Iran is pushing inflation higher and threatening a global recession. Their scapegoats at home are among the most marginalized, vulnerable, and easy to terrorize: trans people and immigrants.

The right-wing offensive against trans rights is also rooted in the drive toward imperialist war worldwide, and especially in the US. To prime society for war, ruling classes have ramped up an offensive of reactionary ideas, including around gender norms, to force conformity and submission. Attacks on trans rights are international, from the ban on LGBTQ events in Hungary (see pg. 13) to anti-homosexuality laws in Uganda, Ghana, and Kenya.

But these attacks aren't inevitable, and they can be fought with working-class struggle. This Pride month, we can't sit back as the far right strips away our rights. It can look like an uphill battle, but we can build this fightback, guided by the historic movements that won gains for queer people as well as the working-class movement for immigrant rights today.

One Year Of Trump

Trump wants to erase trans people from public life and force queer people back into the closet. On his first day in office, Trump signed a dystopian executive order titled "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government," which defines "sex" in federal law to be biological sex assigned at birth. The wave of bans on trans kids in sports are an attack on young peoples' ability to express themselves in public and removes trans kids from a space to socialize.

Trump-endorsed Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has been on the warpath against gender-affirming care for trans youth for the last five years. Just a few weeks ago, Texas Children's hospital agreed to pay $10 million to the state for allegations of falsely charging Medicaid for gender-affirming care procedures. The hospital will now be forced to set up the first "detransition clinic," which Socialist Alternative in Houston has been campaigning against.

When these attacks first ramped up in 2023, trans youth led student walkouts across the country, including ones that Socialist Alternative helped organize. These walkouts were an important display of the anger among young people, but they did not broaden out to the mass movement needed. Today, given the level of the onslaught from the right wing, there is virtually no fightback, with many trans people understandably scared to protest the attacks. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party has all but abandoned standing for queer rights.

The war on trans people is not about "defending women" or "protecting kids." In part, the right is using these attacks to gut social services that impact all working people, like when the White House blamed the halting of SNAP benefits on the Democrats' support for "gender mutilation."

The onslaught is one part of a full-spectrum, all-out attack on the gains of mass movements going back to the '60s and '70s. The overthrow of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 was the opening salvo, and it has accelerated under Trump with the recent gutting of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the dismantling of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and more.

Why has this been necessary? For one, the ruling class was shaken by powerful mass movements of the last decade, like the worldwide women's movement, the George Floyd Rebellion, and the global wave of revolts around the turn of the 2020s. These movements were defeated—either crushed or not strong enough to win—but they showed mass disillusionment in the capitalist system. The ruling class was not satisfied with these defeats—they want to fully extinguish the embers of struggle, and they're attempting to do this by rolling back major victories that our movements have won, going back decades.

Building A Society Fit For War

Repressive gender norms have long been a pillar of capitalism. The nuclear family, for example, is used to squeeze more free labor out of workers with the idea that women should cook and clean at home for free. Throughout history, gender roles have been shaped by the ruling class to fit its economic and political needs. But they've also been shaped by class struggle and social movements, like the gay liberation movement of the '60s and '70s, which, along with the women's movement, fought for liberation against oppressive gender and family norms. A key driving force behind the reassertion of traditional gender roles today, including the crushing of trans rights, is the drive toward imperialist war that relies on conformity to keep workers in line.

The ruling class is gearing up for war all over the world, with the defining inter-imperialist conflict being between the US and China. The ideological groundwork for war has always included sexism: men need to be prepared to defend their country abroad, and women need to hold down the fort at home. Deviations from the norm point away from the nationalist and subservient working class that they want. Today, the attacks on trans rights are an expression of this trend.

The Trump administration even made sure to shoehorn trans people into its counterterrorism strategy, pledging the neutralization of groups "whose ideology is anti-American, radically pro-transgender, and anarchist." Trans people are being painted as an "enemy within," antithetical to the "American way of life."

Transphobia and queerphobia, racism, and sexism—none of these are inherent. No one is born hating trans people, but people are conditioned by the ideas of the ruling class, which needs a scapegoat for their system and to keep working people divided. The ruling class constantly injects these ideas into society, through reactionary legislation, the spewing of hatred from their puppets in office, and many other means. The crises of their own system, like low wages and the rising cost of living, create the conditions for divisions and reactionary beliefs to take root among the working class. We need to combat these ideas, wherever they arise, with class solidarity.

The Democrats Won't Save Us

But this is not something the billionaire-backed Democratic Party can be counted on to do. During the 2024 election, Trump attacked Kamala Harris using an infamous ad stating "Kamala is for they/them, President Trump is for you." Instead of unapologetically fighting for trans rights, Kamala and the establishment backed down in the face of these ads. After her massive loss, one of the DNC's main conclusions was that the Democrats were "too woke" and needed to downplay issues of oppression, especially of trans people.

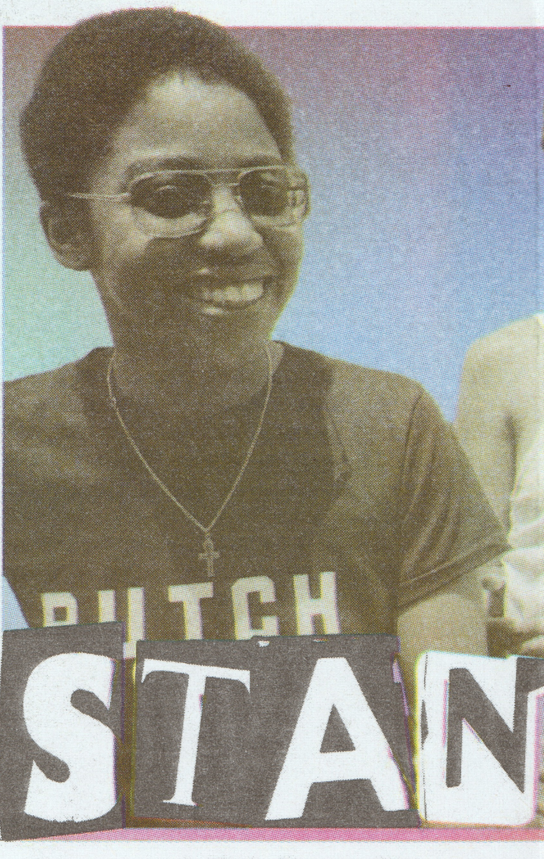
This year, Democrats will try to funnel all energy and fear into the midterms to get them elected as a means to stop Trump. While they pose as the better option simply because they're not Trump, the Democrats have in fact pushed the needle further to the right.

After running on a promise to codify abortion rights into law, the Democrats did nothing but stand by when Roe v. Wade was overturned in 2022, with Biden as president and both houses of Congress under Democratic control (see box). This betrayal is one of the most poignant, but is characteristic of the Democrats' approach—run on promises that turn out to be empty once in office.

We need a new party independent of the Democrats and Republicans, based on the power of movements. It must fight unapologetically for a working-class program against all forms of oppression with rent control, healthcare for all, and a $25/hour minimum wage.

Pride Should Be A Protest

It can seem like an insurmountable challenge to push back the right wing when their attacks have so much momentum, but we need to rebuild the fight that Pride month was founded on in the first



ARE UNDER ATTACK

GAY LIBERATION FRONT
Rexall
DRUGS
REGAL

place. The massive struggles of the '60s and '70s won many gains for queer people today, through tactics like occupations and mass protests, but Democrats and the corporations they serve have done everything they can to water down that radical legacy. The ruling class wants to take the teeth out of our movement and funnel it into safe, often profitable channels, like Pride parades dominated by corporate sponsors.

A key victory of the gay liberation movement was the very right to exist in public spaces. This meant fighting against laws criminalizing homosexuality either overtly, or through indirect laws like bans on "loitering" that were disproportionately enforced against LGBTQ people. Now Trump and the far right are trying to rip away the right for trans and queer people to exist in public.

We can't abandon the fight for unapologetic visibility, but we need to go further than "existence is resistance" too and connect this struggle to economic justice with a working-class program that fights for the common interests of our class and against all oppression. This makes it all the more important to return to fighting tactics and make Pride a protest independent of corporate interests.

Fighting for housing for all and rent control would disproportionately impact trans youth, who face homelessness at much higher rates, but would also be massively beneficial for all working-class people facing increasingly unaffordable housing. Free, universal healthcare with gender-affirming and reproductive care would be life changing for the tens of millions who are uninsured.

Same Struggle, Same Fight

Iconic trans activist Marsha P. Johnson said, "No pride for some of us without liberation for all of us," articulating the interconnectedness of our struggles as working-class people. The fight for LGBTQ liberation is connected to the fight against ICE and the rest of Trump's reactionary agenda. Young people today see this most clearly, with many young trans and queer people playing leading roles in anti-ICE student walkouts we saw earlier this year.

The whipping up of attacks on immigrants is part of the same divide-and-rule strategy, and the best fightback is a united working-class struggle against all oppression. Our movement's biggest blow so far to this reactionary agenda was the Battle of Minneapolis—when tens of thousands of workers in the Twin Cities went on strike against ICE in January. ICE was forced to draw down its operation in Minnesota and implemented a "course correction" in its strategy nationally. It wasn't just immigrants who went on strike—it was a multiracial movement against the billions being funneled into ICE for them to murder our neighbors, while our schools and public services are gutted and falling apart.

The labor movement more broadly cannot be agnostic on issues of oppression and needs to take up their historic maxim: "An injury to one is an injury to all." It's important that some unions have taken a stronger stance on immigration, like SEIU Local 26 in Minneapolis, which called for strike action after some of their immigrant members were abducted. Unions in healthcare, like National Nurses United, should connect the fight for better working conditions to the demand for universal healthcare, including gender-affirming care. Allowing these attacks on trans people to go unanswered, though, leaves the door open for more attacks on the working class. When working people are divided, it weakens our unions and the broader working class.

Pride was founded because of the massive occupations, protests, and direct actions of the gay liberation movement. They fought against workplace discrimination and police violence, which especially targeted queer people of color. We need a new party, independent of the Democrats and Republicans, based in these movements, which fights for the entire working class.

Ultimately, our movement needs to go further and take on the whole capitalist system. Capitalism will always need scapegoats for its crises and will always depend on dividing working people. We need to fight for an egalitarian socialist world, where working-class people democratically run the economy and our communities—a socialist world based on the common needs of all of us rather than climate destruction, far-right attacks, and war. ✪

The Democrats Oversaw The Overturn Of Abortion Rights

The Democrats have not been winning any favors with young people. A Harvard Youth Poll conducted last year showed that 66% of young Americans disapproved of congressional Democrats' job performances. And yet the Democrats, like a conniving ex, will beg us to give them one more chance.

Young people will understandably feel pressured to support Democrats in the midterms to slow down the barrage of Trump's attacks. But recent history shows us that the Democrats don't slow Trump down—they create the conditions for the right to grow back even stronger. We need to look no further than when, despite the Democrats controlling the presidency and both houses of Congress, the federally protected right to an abortion was overturned with virtually no fightback.

The tragic overturn of *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022 did not come without warning. One year prior, Texas had enacted a "heartbeat bill"—a no-exceptions, six-week abortion ban. While Socialist Alternative raised the alarm bells for nearly a year, the Democrats did nothing to fight the predictable and preventable overturn of *Roe*, nor did they try to pass comprehensive federal legislation protecting the right to abortion in its place, or even mobilize a single protest. Worse still, they used the loss to campaign for the midterms on the promise to "protect abortion rights." It was a slap in the face to working women everywhere. Four years later, they've cynically dropped any mention of abortion rights or protecting trans people as they campaign for the 2026 midterms.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* emboldened the right wing and flung open the door for attacks on women and queer people. Following this historic loss, a flood of anti-trans bills, abortion bounty laws, and healthcare funding cuts has left us drowning. So in our fight for women's and queer liberation, we need to remember that the Democrats are not our protectors, but the right wing's enablers. We need a revival of the mass movements, independent of both corporate parties, that won our rights in the first place. ✪

D UP, FIGHT BACK!

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS ARE BEING PRICED OUT OF HEALTH INSURANCE

HEALTHCARE IS
A HUMAN RIGHT

MANDY GEE, CHICAGO

With the price of everyday goods from gasoline to groceries ballooning thanks to Trump's war on Iran, working people are being forced to choose between health insurance and household needs. Relief is nowhere on the horizon as Trump eyes more imperialist adventures, which he will fund by slashing more healthcare and vital social services.

Healthcare in the United States is already the most expensive in the world, with 40% more spent on healthcare per person and worse outcomes than any other wealthy country. We need an all-out fight for universal healthcare and other social services that ordinary people desperately need, and we cannot rely on the Democrats or the courts to win that for us—only organized working-class struggle can.

How ACA Subsidies Made Healthcare More Affordable

The Affordable Care Act's Premium Tax Credit (PTC) has existed since 2014, but in 2021 it was dramatically expanded to cover individuals making more than 400% of the federal poverty level. While the PTC is no substitute for universal healthcare, its dismantling is a massive blow to ordinary people.

As of this January, those who relied on the PTC will have begun paying an average of nearly $2,000 a year just for their monthly healthcare premiums, and that's not counting any of the other costs of healthcare like co-pays and medications. And that's just the average; many enrollees are facing even steeper increases. For one single mom interviewed by PBS, her monthly premium payment is going from $85 a month to nearly $750—a 782% increase. In a worsening economy, this will be downright deadly for tens of thousands of ordinary people.

Higher Prices For Everyone

Anticipating the end of the PTC, the ghouls running these insurance companies reported last year that they will charge between 12 and 27% more for premiums in 2026. This is because the insurance industry relies on healthier individuals paying more in premiums than what they utilize for care, in order to "balance out" older and sicker people who typically receive services that cost more than what they pay in. With younger and healthier people dropping coverage because it's too expensive, more sick and "high-cost" patients remain, and companies hike their prices. And then the cycle repeats.

So for the people who can afford to keep their ACA plan, or can't afford it but have to make it work some way or else they'll die, insurance costs will only go up in the coming years. This sounds inhumane to ordinary people, but it's the logic of the profit-seeking capitalist system: if your entire goal is making more profits than you made last year, it doesn't matter that needing medical care is not a choice. Real human lives get reduced to statistics and stamped as low- or high-cost by insurers to ensure they're charging enough to see higher returns this year. Capitalism does not care how it tramples on people's lives—which is why we have to fight to end it, along with its political puppets.

The Democrats Won't Give Us Universal Healthcare

The callous disregard the Republican Party has for human life has been on display long before Trump's first administration, but the Democrats are no better; they haven't lifted a finger for healthcare reform since Obama was in office. In fact, the Democratic establishment has done everything it can to quell discontent around healthcare, crushing Bernie Sanders' campaign for universal healthcare not once, but twice—with the latter taking place during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Even the "progressive" wing of the Democratic Party has completely dropped the fight for universal healthcare. In late 2020, the Squad could have leveraged their power by withholding their vote for Nancy Pelosi unless she held a floor vote on Medicare for All. Despite broad support for this tactic, they refused. AOC argued that there was no point to staging a vote on Medicare for All only to lose it, and that progressives' focus should be on "winnable" measures like a nationwide $15 minimum wage—which also did not happen!

If a Democrat wins the 2028 presidential election and Trump accepts the results, we still wouldn't see the healthcare reform we need, including a return of the ACA tax credits. We need a mass working-class movement that includes both union and non-union medical providers across practices, their patients, and the broader community. Additionally, we can have no faith in the Democrats—working people need our own party now more than ever.

We Can't Stop At Healthcare: Fight For Socialism!

The $75 billion allocated to ICE in Trump's Big Beautiful Bill last year could pay for the cost of ACA subsidies five times over. The $1.5 trillion "defense" budget for the 2027 fiscal year could cover subsidies for over a century. The government obviously has the money to maintain ACA subsidies; healthcare just isn't a priority for either party to fund. That means our fight needs to be aimed directly at the billionaire class.

The capitalist system, which the ruling parties globally uphold, depends on the working class staying divided and squeezed by the astronomical cost of living; it counts on us being too beaten down to mount a fightback. But it is workers' struggle, not politicians' promises, that has won victories for the working class and most oppressed communities. We need to organize real organs of struggle in our workplaces, schools, and communities, not just against ICE and imperialist war, but for universal healthcare, fully-funded public schools, affordable housing, a minimum wage workers can thrive on, and more.

But we can't stop there—we need to overthrow this whole rotten system. Only under a socialist society, where the economy is democratically run by workers in the interests of people and the planet, can we permanently end wars and state brutality and ensure that every person has the resources they need to thrive. ✪

The Struggle for Disability Rights

ALECIA MORRIS, PITTSBURGH

When Trump took office and named anti-vaxxer RFK Jr. his Secretary of Health, he and his administration went on a rampage against health institutions. All of this has devastating effects on ordinary people, and in particular, the disabled community.

To fight back against attacks on disabled people today, we must look to past movements that won protections for disabled people. The struggle for disability rights in the US heated up in the late 1960s, which also saw massive movements for Black liberation, women's rights, and LGBTQ rights. This was a time of major social upheaval, with one struggle inspiring another and compounding their momentum.

Organizations such as Disabled in Action engaged in direct protest, like their month-long occupation of the San Francisco Department of Health building. Their aim was to put pressure on the government to make it illegal for federally-funded agencies to discriminate against disabled people. This audacious act saw the solidarity of unions and Civil Rights organizations, as well as the Black Panthers, who donated food to the demonstrators. The battle ended in victory.

Read the full article!

CHICAGO'S RUSH HOSPITAL NURSES WIN UNION VOTE

CHRIS CARROLL, CHICAGO

By Monday, May 18, it was official: Rush Hospital nurses had won a union! By a count of 1,190 to 350—a resounding 77% "yes" vote—Rush nurses sent a powerful message: workers want to fight for their interests and the best way to fight is through a union.

Across the US, working conditions have worsened for nurses. Chief among these concerns is an epidemic of short staffing. While hospital administrations and their investors fatten their profit margins, understaffing means overworking nurses and a diminishing level of care for patients. Additionally, nurses' benefits like health coverage, pensions, and professional development have been eroded. As in most industries, nurses' wages have not kept pace with rising inflation, worsened by Trump's war on Iran.

These factors inspired nurses at Rush Hospital to fight for union recognition. It took a class struggle approach to win the union recognition vote, and it will take a class struggle approach to win the contract battle. A group of committed nurses, including a member of Socialist Alternative, led this fight by organizing serious, consistent discussions with coworkers in every department about the need for a union to fight together for their common interests. This initiative was crucial, especially given the top-down, extremely protracted approach by the officials and staffers from National Nurses United, the union organizing the drive.

This same bottom-up approach to organizing their coworkers—with a clear understanding that it's them versus the administrators—will be needed to overcome the bosses, who will do everything they can to undermine and avoid a contract, including paying a union-busting firm to spread lies and intimidation. But these new union nurses know better: solidarity and struggle, and striking if necessary, is the prescription to cure their billionaire exploitation.

Because Rush is a large nursing school, it has connections to ALL other Chicago-area hospitals. This union victory is big news and will start plenty of discussions among nurses at other hospitals. If all nurses are understaffed and underpaid, then all nurses need a union!

While the Trump administration is doing everything in its power to gut and crush unions, there is a broad pro-union mood in society—polling that shows 68% favorability toward unions, and even higher among young Americans. Union leaderships need to go all in and coordinate resources to organize the unorganized on a mass scale.

If union leaderships don't step up with fighting strategies and resources, then workers will have to take the lead and win strong contracts despite them. In Chicago, it is the Rush nurses leading the way! ✪

National Nurses United
NURSES FOR DEMOCRACY
NURSES FOR DEMOCRACY
NURSES FOR DEMOCRACY
NURSES FOR

INTERVIEW: How My Non-Union Grocery Store Sicked Out On May 1

Editor's Note: *The following interview is with a Socialist Alternative member and worker at a grocery chain in Pennsylvania, who led a successful sickout on May Day. Because of retaliation from management, the store name and worker are being kept anonymous.*

Socialist Alternative: How did you and your coworkers get the idea to take action on May Day?

Rowan: Earlier this year, around a dozen of my coworkers and I started talking about unionizing our store, so in March we called a meeting to discuss initial steps for organizing. During this meeting, we talked about how workers in Minneapolis participated in a general strike on January 23, which forced an end to "Operation Metro Surge."

I talked about how following January 23, a nationwide day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping" on May 1 had been called by labor leaders. While most of my coworkers hadn't heard of this, many saw May Day as an opportunity to utilize our power as workers to take collective action against ICE in our own city.

SAlt: What steps did you take to get more workers involved in organizing? How was action planned?

R: In order to take action, we needed regular organizing meetings outside the workplace with a dedicated and trusted core of coworkers. These were crucial in strategizing how to motivate more coworkers to get involved in the organizing effort.

Our third organizing meeting doubled in number of attendees from our first, and in April we voted to sick out on May Day. We decided to coalesce our anti-ICE and workplace goals into a single list of concrete demands. It was important for us to keep in mind what we were fighting for and why we were sicking out!

These demands were voted for with 100% agreement amongst our coworkers:

- Abolish ICE—ICE out of our city—no more kidnapping our neighbors!
- End workplace discrimination against our queer and trans workers!
- No to our workplace cutting hours and benefits!

SAlt: What were some of the challenges you faced, and how did you address them?

R: The company where we work presents a faux-progressive facade while being notorious for union busting. One of our main challenges was retaliation from management, with my being pulled into multiple intimidation meetings, having my scheduled hours shortened, and having my benefits cut. The management knew I was a lead organizer and understood that if they could isolate or break me, they could discourage my coworkers as well. Leading by example and not letting them break me was incredibly important, as the management's actions were hypervisible to the rest of the store.

In many ways, the retaliation backfired on the bosses, as it made more coworkers curious about the organizing and ultimately brought more people to join our meetings. While retaliation also created understandable concern amongst my coworkers, we addressed it directly during our meetings. We read through all relevant store policies and made concrete plans for how to handle intimidation tactics, including how to endure disciplinary meetings and how we would collectively respond to management's questions. This included denying questions about organizing, refusing to share who our "friends" are at work, and remaining calm if disciplinary actions were threatened.

SAlt: How did the action on May Day go? What were your main takeaways?

R: On May Day, 17 workers participated in the sick-out, none of whom had ever taken workplace action before! The bosses scrambled to respond, with nine managers working to cover shifts that day. While the store did not shut down, workflow was impeded, and the store lost tens of thousands in projected revenue as they could not keep the shelves fully stocked. Because of our organizing efforts, this was by far the biggest blow to profits our store has ever seen at the hands of action!

Even though the store stayed open during regular hours, this was an important step in building our confidence to fight and giving us direct experience with organizing collective action. It is experience we can continue to build upon in the future.

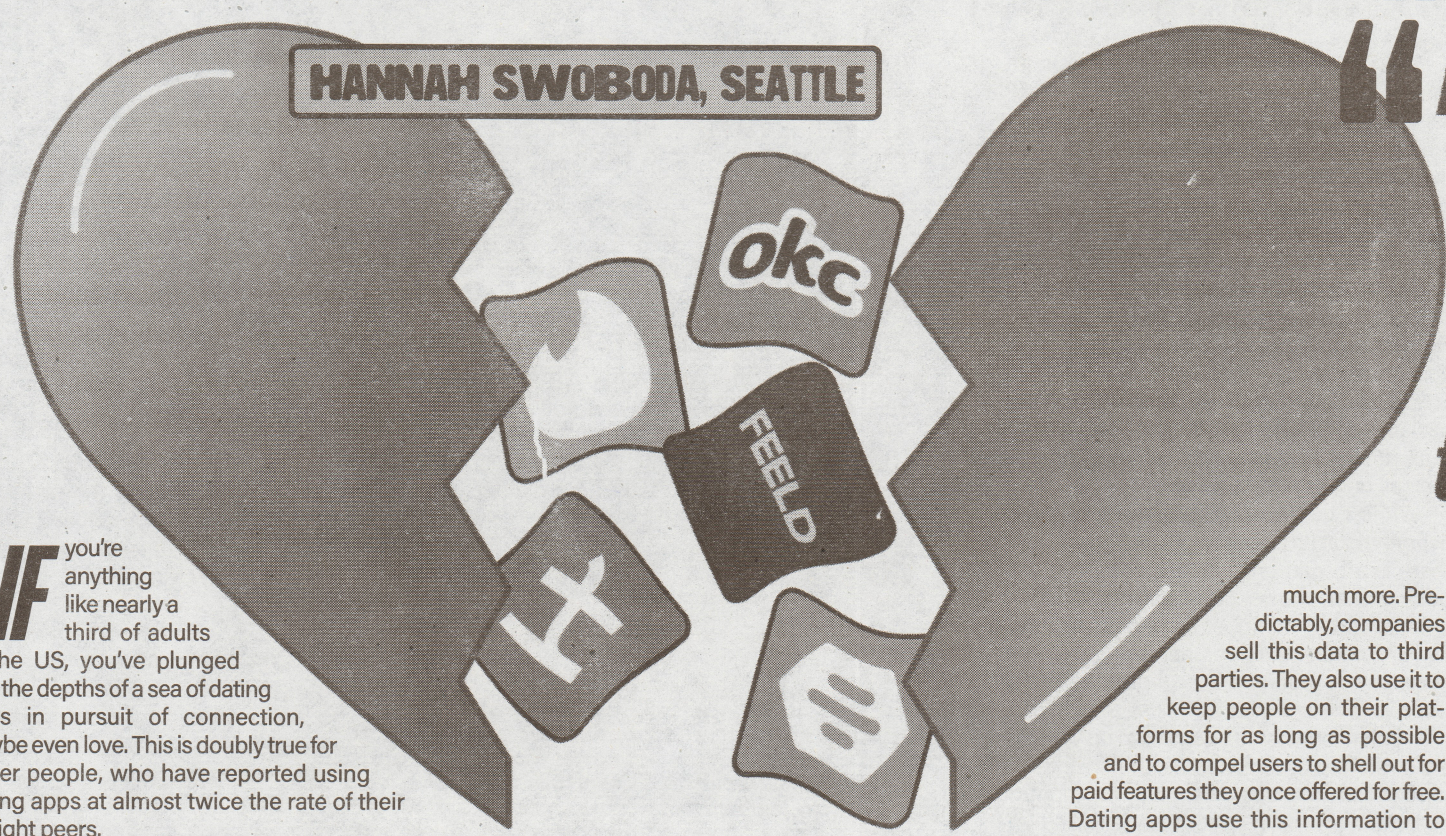
SAlt: Now that you and your coworkers took this action, what comes next?

R: Our immediate next step is to hold another organizing meeting to review May Day, discuss what went well, and identify what could have been stronger. All of us who participated in the sick-out were pulled into one-on-one intimidation meetings with management following the action, but we were prepared for how to handle their questioning.

Despite this (unsurprising) response from management, we plan to continue meeting and to use this as an opportunity to begin broader organizing towards unionization. Actions like our sick-out on May Day can set an important example for other non-union workplaces, and build momentum towards bigger organizing efforts. We urgently need to organize the unorganized and build a fighting labor movement to lead the struggle against Trump's attacks on working people! ✪

THE DATING APP HELLSCAPE

HANNAH SWOBODA, SEATTLE



> **“Despite the popularity of dating apps, we’re lonelier than ever.”**

If you’re anything like nearly a third of adults in the US, you’ve plunged into the depths of a sea of dating apps in pursuit of connection, maybe even love. This is doubly true for queer people, who have reported using dating apps at almost twice the rate of their straight peers.

This technology sells us a vision of convenient dating that we can fit into our busy lives, with seemingly limitless profiles at our fingertips. Online dating promises to help us overcome a multitude of obstacles to dating in modern life: whether that’s the struggle to rebuild your social life after moving to a new city for school or work, the isolation of working from home, or the disappearance of “third spaces” for socializing. They have also become a way to explore one’s sexuality: over half of young LGBTQ dating app users have reported coming out on a dating app before telling their friends or family.

Despite the popularity of dating apps, we’re lonelier than ever. Terms like “loneliness epidemic” and “dating recession” have been thrown around to describe the sorry state of our social lives. Over two-thirds of young adults in the US report that they have gone on either no dates or only a few in the last year.

Dating apps didn’t cause our isolation, but they’re not necessarily making us feel any better. Users increasingly report dissatisfaction and even burnout—78% of respondents in a 2025 survey said they’ve felt emotionally, mentally, or physically exhausted by dating apps. The experience of swiping on the apps can feel utterly dehumanizing, more like a validation slot machine than a way to connect with the person behind the profile.

We’re being sold something alright. Rather than a tool for genuine connection, it’s a product designed to exploit your loneliness in order to make money for the investors in the multi-billion dollar dating app industry.

It’s Not You, It’s The Algorithm

Hinge boasts that it’s “designed to be deleted,” but in reality all of these dating apps are consciously engineered to prevent meaningful matches. That’s because shareholders profit most when app users are single and desperate. Match Group, the company that owns roughly two-thirds of all dating apps including Tinder and Hinge, has even been sued for employing the same deceptive and coercive practices that online gambling sites use to keep people hooked.

Dating apps collect a tremendous amount of data: not just the info we list in our bios, but also our swipe patterns, how long we look at each profile, when and where we use the app, the content and length of all our conversations, and so much more. Predictably, companies sell this data to third parties. They also use it to keep people on their platforms for as long as possible and to compel users to shell out for paid features they once offered for free. Dating apps use this information to determine when we will be feeling our most vulnerable, sending perfectly-timed notifications to keep us glued to the app and prompting us to pay to “boost” our visibility. Their algorithms determine which profiles we will be most interested in, conveniently displaying these just after we’ve reached the daily limit of free swipes. What price must one pay to get rid of these paywalls? Turns out that’s also dictated by an algorithm, fine-tuned to estimate just how much you’re willing to pay.

These companies’ prioritization of profits above all else isn’t just frustrating, it’s downright dangerous. In recent years there’s been a documented increase in violent sexual assaults that occurred after meeting someone through a dating app, platforms that often amplify sexism and capitalist gender norms. An investigation by the Dating Apps Reporting Project revealed how Match Group has utterly failed to ban serial rapists from its platforms and has resisted implementing safety measures due to concerns that this could impact the company’s growth.

It Doesn’t Have To Be This Way

Even before they were ruthlessly monetized, dating apps offered us a mere band-aid for a deeper societal wound. Capitalism makes it extremely difficult to organically form the sort of meaningful connections we crave. Dating apps are the product of a system that demands we “optimize” our lives in order to race up the relationship escalator and “settle down”—all in the interest of fulfilling capitalist society’s expectations of what our relationships should look like. The pressures to get married and raise kids (the next generation of workers to make profits for the billionaires) can feel inescapable because that’s precisely what the system wants. On top of that, we’re forced to squeeze our romantic lives—not to mention friendships!—into the limited time we get between the long hours, multiple jobs, and side hustles that the climbing cost of living demands of so many of us.

To fix dating, we need a fundamentally different kind of society. Imagine having the breathing room to pursue your hobbies and meet new people in your community without a tremendous sense of urgency to find “the one” in the few free hours you get between shifts.

A democratically-run planned economy which bases production on human need rather than the profits of a few would not only give us much more free time, it would also remove any sort of economic pressure to be in unsatisfying relationships, or to live with romantic partners when we’d rather live alone. Dating under capitalism can feel like a matter of life and death because we’re not paid enough to live. An economic system that guarantees everyone’s basic needs, and removes the material basis for oppression based on gender and sexuality, would pave the way for our relationships to become less transactional and more based on genuine desire. ✪

Queer Liberation & The Russian Revolution

The following is an excerpt of a 2017 article published on socialistalternative.org

The socialist October Revolution in 1917 brought about fundamental, thoroughgoing changes in Russian society. Millions of people in the largest country on Earth quickly found themselves far freer than they had ever been under the despotic, anti-Semitic Tsar, the strictures of the church, and the brutality of Russian capitalism and landlordism. Alongside the working class taking control of the Russian economy, the Russian Revolution also led to unprecedented advances in the liberation of women and LGBTQ people.

The early Soviet Union was the first industrialized state to recognize same-sex marriage, and, alongside Weimar Germany, briefly led the world in gender corrective surgery. Soviet medical experts working alongside transgender people began exploring the idea of gender not being a simple binary of man and woman but, instead, a spectrum.

Same-sex marriage recognition occurred almost organically: two people of the same legal gender applied to be married, and local courts and officials in the wake of the Russian Revolution quickly decided there was no basis on which to deny the request. Russian attitudes toward same-sex relationships quickly evolved from challenging the idea of same-sex relationships as “perverse,” to medicalization, to the statement by biologist N. K. Kol’tsov that “there is no intermediate sex, but rather an infinite quantity of intermediate sexes.”

As soon as gender corrective surgery began to be practiced in the early 1920s, its practitioners were inundated with inquiries from ordinary Russians who had fought with their own bodies for their whole lives and finally saw a means of resolution.

With Stalin’s consolidation of power in the late 1920s came a vicious social reaction. In 1936, it restored homosexuality to the status of a crime in Russia. The bureaucracy turned inward, away from world revolution, and they increasingly sought to give a social base to the regime through reverting to reactionary social ideology on the family, women’s role, and sexuality.

The best, most rational, most ethical arguments or plans for LGBTQ liberation mean nothing without a mass movement to back them up. Historic gains in LGBTQ rights made after the Russian Revolution were tragically lost in Stalin’s USSR due to the counter-revolutionary political expropriation of the working class. In the US and around the world today, working people of all genders, orientations, and identities must organize together, as a class, in order to stop the right-wing assault. ✪

HUNGARY: AFTER ORBÁN, STRUGGLE MUST CONTINUE

> *Neither Magyar nor the imperialist EU will effectively fight for queer people.*

SAMMY ALBRIGHT, NEW HAVEN

Former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's stunning loss in Hungary's April election opened up new hopes for LGBTQ liberation. Over the last sixteen years, Orbán transformed the country into a laboratory for the global rise of far-right populism, which figures such as Donald Trump closely followed. He initially ran against the EU and its "liberal values" following the 2008 Great Recession. In power, he rewrote the constitution, placed loyalists at all levels of government, and consolidated authority in the executive.

As he centralized power, he required new scapegoats for the worsening quality of life; he did as the far right always does and turned to one of the most marginalized groups of society—the queer community. In a major escalation starting in 2020, he systematically attacked all aspects of LGBTQ life. He banned legal recognition for trans and intersex people, restricted adoption by unmarried people, and banned all portrayal of queer life to children. In 2025, he banned all Pride festivals. 200,000 people defied this attack in Budapest, waving symbolic grayscale Pride flags and transforming it into a mass protest against Orbán.

In April, protests and broader social anger at Orban's policies translated into a stunning defeat for his regime. Millions elected former Budapest Mayor Péter Magyar with the hope that he would reverse Orbán's broader authoritarian project, including his attacks on queer rights. But is he really an ally in the fight for LGBTQ liberation?

No Support For The Right-Wing Magyar Government

On the campaign trail, Magyar promised to bring "system change" to Hungary, but his past as an insider in Orbán's party betrays whose side he's actually on. Magyar joined Orbán's Fidesz party in 2006. When Fidesz took power in 2010, he occupied various positions of power within the country's government and the EU until 2024. He publicly broke from the party in 2024 and joined the centrist Tisza opposition party. However, he did this to opportunistically rail against Orbán's corruption; not on a principled working-class basis of fighting for LGBTQ rights.

Magyar stayed silent on LGBTQ rights while campaigning, even when hundreds of thousands actively defied the attacks. His carefully tailored message focused on corruption, economics, and supporting the EU rather than Russia. Neither on the campaign trail nor since he took power has he proposed any significant changes to Orbán's severe restrictions on queer rights.

Far from taking a fundamental stand in opposition to the ban on Pride events, Magyar merely criticized the ban as a "distraction" from other issues affecting Hungarians. The 200,000 Pride marchers understood that attacks on LGBTQ rights were an attack on everyone's rights. Neither Magyar nor the imperialist EU will effectively fight for queer people.

Build The Struggle For LGBTQ Rights & Socialism

While Magyar was the main beneficiary of the anti-Orbán sentiment, voter polls show that Hungarians want to go much further than Magyar's conservative platform. A poll from the European Council on Foreign Relations found that 77% of his voters supported an ambitious climate policy, and 71% supported the new government protecting the rights of LGBTQ people.

The movement should look to the mass defiance from 2025 Pride as the way forward. Despite his reactionary crackdown, the strength of the 2025 protest prevented Orbán from enforcing his laws en masse. The movement was so strong that he could only crack down on Pride organizers after its momentum died down.

The movement blocked key undemocratic laws from being enforced, but in order to wage an offensive struggle for queer rights, the Hungarian working class needs its own mass party. This party would do more than the country's existing "socialist party," which refused to run any candidates, instead endorsing Tisza candidates as the "lesser of two evils." What is needed is a party that would organize a relentless struggle in the streets and in the halls of power by connecting the fight for LGBTQ liberation with broader working-class demands such as fully-funded socialized healthcare with accessible gender-affirming healthcare.

Ultimately, to achieve real system change, a mass party of the Hungarian working class must take on the whole capitalist system and fight for a socialist world, free of all divide-and-rule oppression. ✪

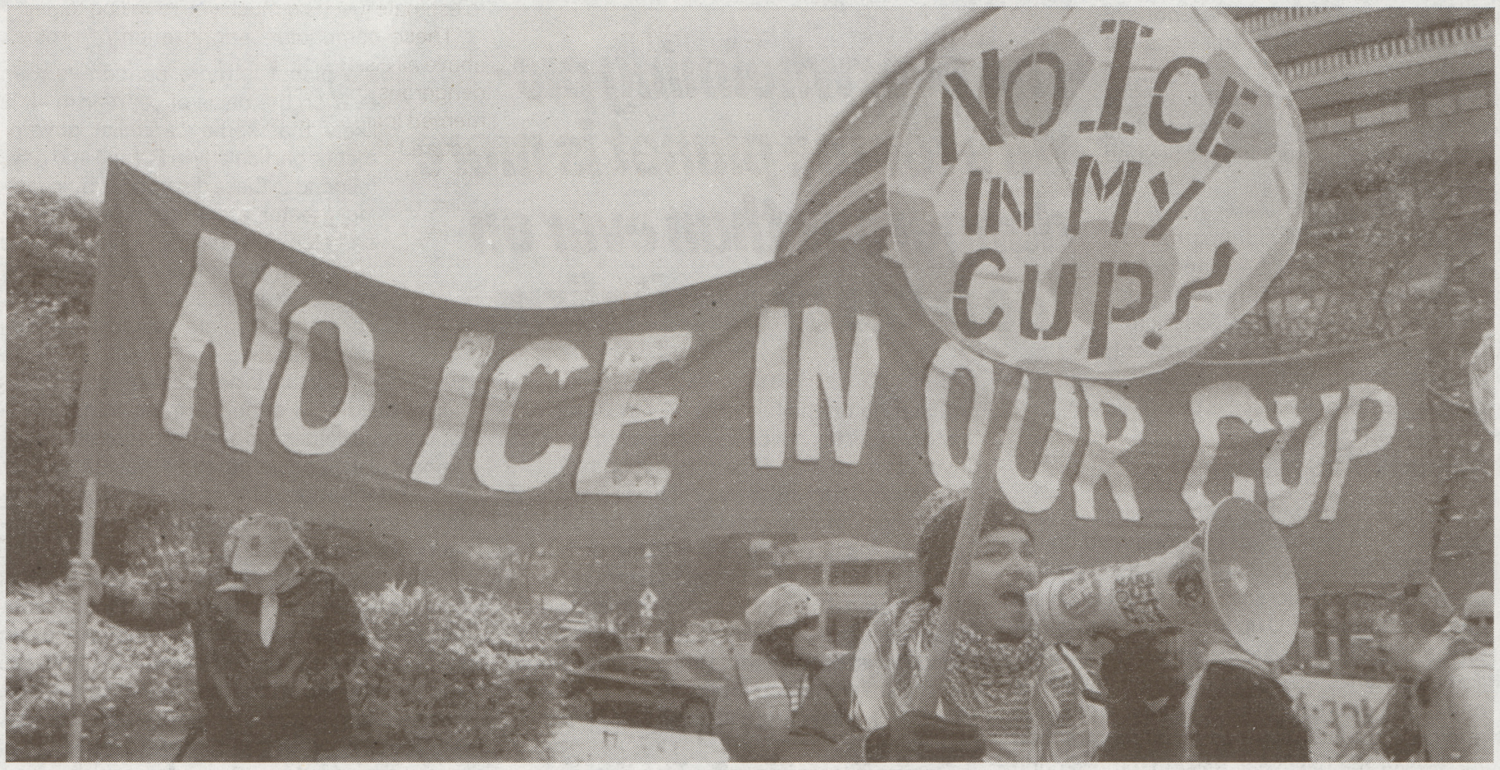
GIVE FIFA THE BOOT

GABE PELLY, CHARLOTTE

Among the many reasons nearly two-thirds of the world population will stop everything to watch "the beautiful game" this summer are the unfolding stories of superstars becoming legends, underdog countries upsetting global powers, and rivalries dating back a century. At its purest, fans' passion for a national team does not come at the expense of another and the universal human experiences of hope, joy, and loss bring the world closer together.

Although the 2026 Men's World Cup will be jointly hosted by the US, Mexico, and Canada, it takes place amidst the backdrop of rising nationalism, escalating wars, and compounding inequality. As with past tournaments, this World Cup will be tainted by the crimes of the ruling class: profiteering ticket prices, the threat of excluding Iran as a consequence of imperialist war, and ICE and CBP threatening human rights violations against international visitors and immigrant workers in the US.

It's little wonder the World Cup is perpetually plagued by controversy when it's organized by FIFA, the notoriously corrupt world football federation dominated by the strongest capitalist nations. Even if you are not familiar with FIFA, you may have heard about its president, Gianni Infantino, and his "FIFA Peace Prize" awarded to Trump for his "tireless efforts to promote peace," just weeks before he kidnapped a sitting head of state and mere months before he launched an unprovoked war on Iran. A huge Trump sycophant, Infantino recently announced FIFA will partner with Trump's "Board of Peace" to build a stadium in the wreckage of Gaza.

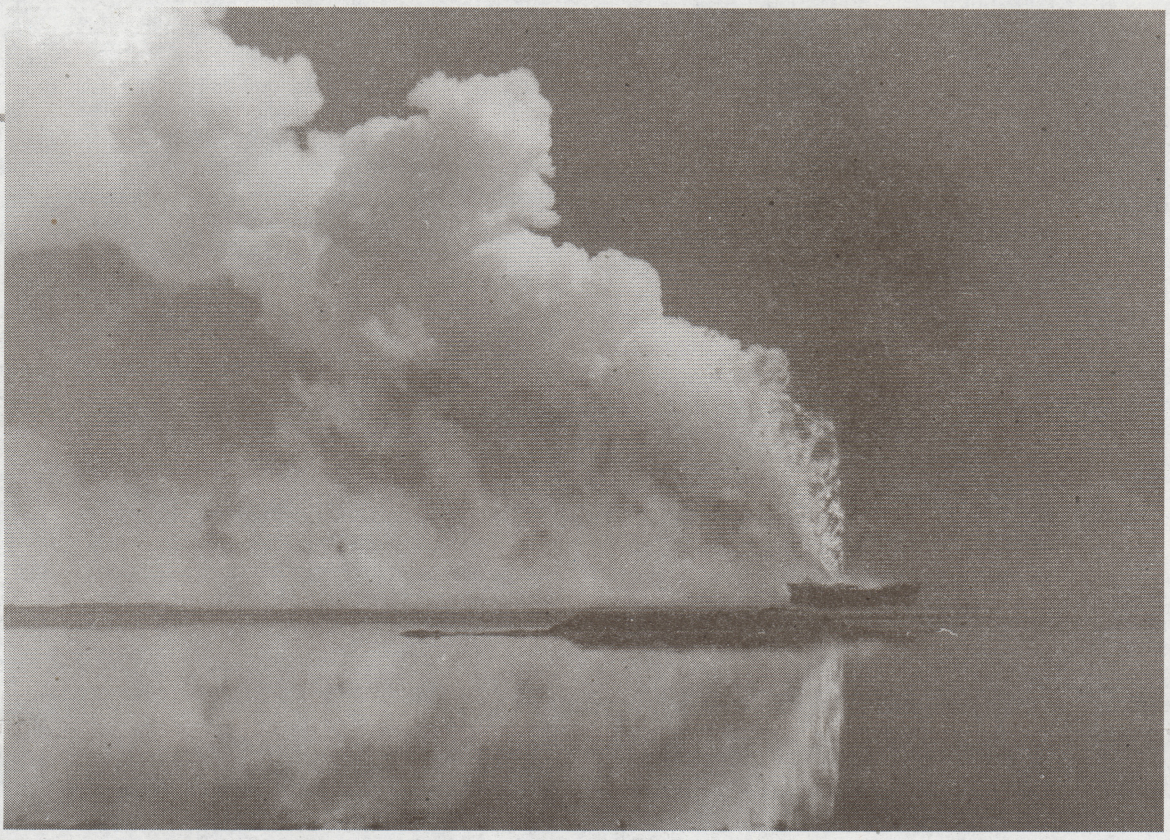

NO ICE IN OUR CUP
NO I.C.E IN MY CUP?

Revenue from the World Cup is projected to exceed $11 billion, a figure that would see FIFA comfortably among the Fortune 500 companies. FIFA's revenue comes from advertising and extortionate ticket prices, while maximizing profits by shunting expenses for public transit and security onto host cities. The xenophobic US government has also banned fans from Haiti, Iran, and the Ivory Coast from attending while nationals from dozens of other countries will be subjected to an invasive search of five years of social media history.

From its roots in the factory clubs of England and Scotland, football has always been intimately tied to the working class. As capitalist relations were exported around the world so too was passion for the game. But while the sport belongs to the people, it is in an existential struggle for its soul against rampant commodification and financialization. To reclaim the game, working people must relegate FIFA to history and develop a new international football federation from the grassroots up. At its core, a new federation and World Cup would need to champion accessibility: providing at-cost tickets and free public broadcasting; rejecting trans sport bans; and giving full equality to women's soccer in wages and resources. ✪

THE WAR ON IRAN IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER

TOM COSTELLO, SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE (ISA IN ENGLAND, WALES & SCOTLAND)



The overwhelming picture for the planet is more dangerous than ever on the basis of capitalism.

After the first bombs landed on Iran in March, the media was flooded with images of Tehran on fire. This was in the wake of Israeli military attacks on four major oil depots on the outskirts of the city, which left millions of barrels of oil in flames. Iranians woke up to find the whole city shrouded in black dust, the air thick with CO2 and methane, and the sky glowing orange. The level of air pollution was so high that "black rain" fell in Tehran.

But this is only the tip of the iceberg. Researchers at Queen Mary, University of London found more than five million tons of CO2 were released into the atmosphere during just two weeks of the conflict—equivalent to the combined emissions of the world's 84 lowest-emitting countries. Part of this is driven by the enormous fuel consumption required for the deployment of missiles towards and from US military bases in the surrounding region.

There have been multiple reports of oil spills in the Persian Gulf since the start of the war, with oil washing up on islands that are protected wildlife refuges, which will have devastating consequences extending far beyond the war itself.

The pollution of water networks, destruction of critical infrastructure, and contamination of soil and water sources will endanger the livelihoods and health of future generations across the region. This is a war not only against the Iranian and Lebanese people, but also against the planet.

Mega-Profits For Big Oil

While workers weigh up the choice between filling up their gas tanks or putting food on the table, for the fossil fuel industry, this war has been enormously lucrative. The squeeze on the oil supply has ramped up fuel costs—and therefore profits. The EU's fuel bill has risen by 22 billion euros since the start of the war. In Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world, the prices of gas and diesel have risen more than 140% over the past year, making it the second most expensive country for fuel globally.

Meanwhile, according to *The Guardian*, the top 100 oil and gas companies internationally gained $30 million every hour in windfall profits over the first month of the war. BP boasted about "exceptional oil trading" after reporting a doubling of first quarter profits compared to 2025. Some countries, such as Australia, have tried to offset the rising costs for consumers by cutting fuel tax—but allowing big business to continue profiteering off the fuel crisis. Even Trump has floated a gas tax holiday, which would save US drivers at most a whopping $9 a month.

The fossil fuel industry profiting off war and destruction is nothing new. In 2022, big oil more than doubled its profits after the start of the war in Ukraine. The US fossil fuel industry receives an estimated $35 billion per year in subsidies. Meanwhile, predatory institutions like the IMF warn against governments implementing measures to soften the economic blow of the energy shock on workers and the poor.

A Green Transition On The Way?

Sections of the capitalist media have suggested that war with Iran could "supercharge" the global shift towards renewable energy under capitalism. As the argument goes, the war may deepen the appeal of green energy sources like wind and solar because they're less vulnerable to geopolitical shocks and wartime disruption than fossil fuels.

But it is fundamentally misleading to read too the planet is more dangerous than ever on the basis of capitalism. It is likely that some capitalist governments, particularly in Europe and Asia, respond to these disruptions by investing greater amounts in solar, wind, and electric vehicles. Countries have been burned by successive energy supply-chain crises and will seek solutions that insulate themselves from shocks abroad.

But that is not the same as the capitalists building a genuine green transition: a coordinated, joined-up and (by necessity) international plan to phase out fossil fuels altogether. This is utterly impossible on the basis of capitalism, based as it is around private profit and competing nation-states.

In many places, the cheaper or faster solution to the Iran energy crisis is not green at all. Countries like India, Thailand, and Vietnam, who can no longer rely on liquified natural gas from the Gulf, are ramping up coal power to take its place. Some are turning to burning wood and charcoal, which comes with health hazards. Mexico is returning to fracking, European countries are expanding drilling in the North Sea, and Greece is approving offshore exploration for the first time in decades.

Anyone optimistic about war making the world green is also neglecting the role the inter-imperialist rivalry between the US and China can in fact have on stimulating the fossil fuel industry.

The entire logic of inter-imperialist conflict, centered as it is on competition for resources like oil, gas, and rare earth minerals, not only threatens new and even more catastrophic wars, but also deepens the climate crisis and obstructs even the limited measures that might otherwise be achieved under capitalism. Governments are increasingly justifying their inaction on the climate by blaming "the other side" in conflicts.

When Donald Trump makes sweeping cuts to environmental protection programs, expands fossil fuel subsidies, and brands climate activists as "terrorists," he isn't just expressing his own personal climate denialism. Wider political and class forces are at work. In a period of escalating imperialist tensions, the ruling classes of the imperialist powers are increasingly subordinating climate action to military expansion, diverting resources into rising defense budgets. Meanwhile, the rest of us are facing new rounds of austerity under the guise of making savings for the sake of defence.

New Revolts On The Horizon

This new era makes Lenin's description of capitalism as "horror without end" more relevant than ever. But alongside these horrors comes growing resistance to them.

Already, the energy shock has provoked protests and strikes in a series of countries including Ireland, the Philippines, Kenya, Comoros, Mozambique, and India, some of which have won concessions from governments. But if future movements are to avoid defeats and instead fundamentally change society, they will require a clear socialist program and mass organizations of the working class, so we can confront the billionaire class responsible for these crises.

The international labor movement must unite around demands for investment in healthcare, education, housing, and a genuine green transition—not militarism and war. This should include demands to massively tax the billionaires and the windfall profits of oil companies, but also crucially, for the nationalization of the oil and gas industry, the energy sector, the banks, and major corporations. Bringing the major polluters into democratic working-class ownership and control would make it possible to direct investment towards renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure, while making sure it isn't the working class which bears the burden of the crisis. Only a coordinated, international socialist plan of production can genuinely balance the needs of people and the planet.

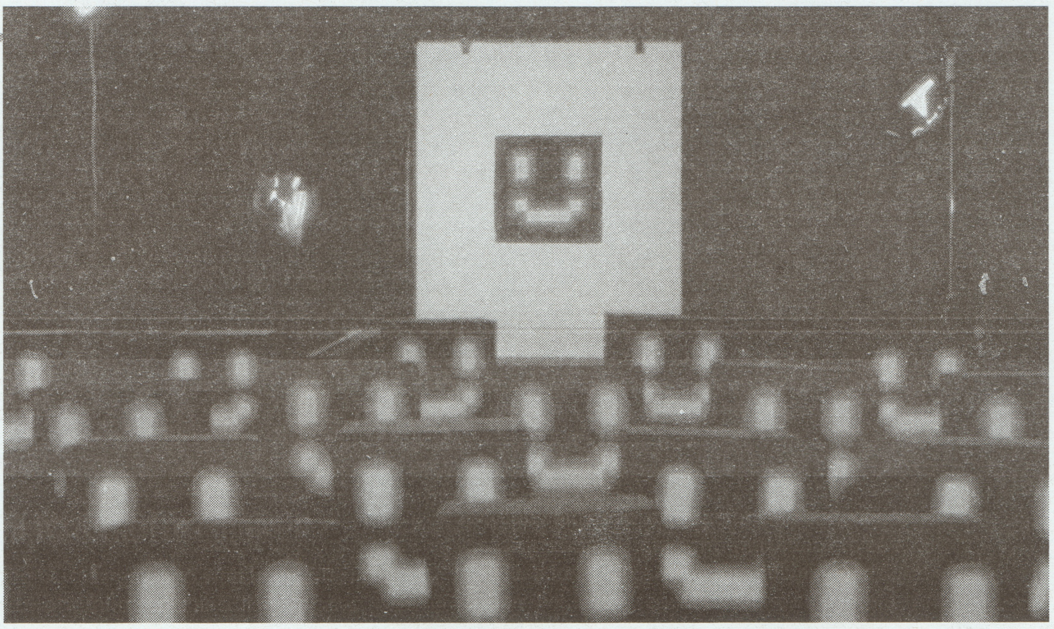
Capitalism remains the fundamental barrier to building a sustainable economy in harmony with nature, as well as the root cause of war and environmental destruction. International Socialist Alternative is organizing across the world to bring that system to an end. Join us! ✪

HOW AI IS SHAPING THE FUTURE
MOVIE REVIEW OF *THE AI DOC*

LEAH STEVENS, CINCINNATI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) discourse is dominating every corner of the world, and even the most devoted analog lovers can't escape the impact that fast-moving AI developments are having on our day-to-day lives. At the time of writing, we are over 12 weeks into what analysts are dubbing the "first AI war." While the rich are reaping the benefits of AI stocks breaking record after record, ordinary people face the threat of AI replacing their jobs. Yard signs saying "No Data Centers" outside the homes of working families are scattered across the Midwest, as ordinary people take on the electricity costs needed to power AI.

Is AI destroying the world, or can it save humanity? This is the main question *The AI Doc: Or How I Became an Apocaloptimist* (don't worry, we'll come back to that word) aims to answer in a series of interviews with the top dogs of the tech world.



AI Doomsday Vs. AI Utopia

The first section of the documentary focuses on interviews with the "doomers"—the experts who paint the picture of a robot apocalypse. Computer scientist Yoshua Bengio explains the race to reach Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), dubbed the "holy grail of AI," which could develop into super-human "super intelligence." This has led to a blind rush by AI companies to heavily invest into training AI with little regard for risk and consequences.

Even more extreme is the future described by researcher Eliezer Yudkowsky, known in the tech community as "the doomsday guy." To him, the only natural result of the development in AI is "the abrupt extermination of humanity." Person after person describes how this is not the future they would want to raise a child.

On the other side of the aisle are the optimists, who paint a rose-tinted future that somehow feels even more ominous and out-of-touch with current reality. Engineer and businessman Peter Diamandis, who has the energy of a guru cult leader, says that because of AI, "now is the most exciting time to be alive."

He describes that his soon-to-be-born son will be able to reap the benefits of a "post-scarcity world" including the best education with AI tutors, the best healthcare delivered by AI, the freedom to pursue passions instead of working a mundane job.

The problem with both the apocalyptists and the optimists is that technologically there is no separating "good" from "bad" AI—the promise and peril are inherently connected. The AI technology for early cancer detection is the same AI technology for the creation of biological weapons. It is here that the documentary begins to get to the heart of the issue—the problem is not AI in and of itself, but how it is being deployed, and who is deploying it.

> ***The problem is not AI in and of itself, but how it's being deployed, and who's deploying it.***

A Mystical Object Or Just Five Billionaires?

First, the how. As another group of experts explain, AI is not a problem of the future—it is having an impact as we speak. The consequences are stark: a concentration of wealth at the top and layoffs for the bottom, the water needed to cool data centers threatens our drinking water, and the surge in energy demand to power data centers is tipping the global climate into further catastrophe. Most dangerously, AI is shaping a new form of deadly warfare that has already contributed to thousands of indiscriminate civilian deaths in Gaza and Iran. The staggering energy costs of data centers are being passed onto ordinary people, which has sparked mass anger and can be a flashpoint for future struggle. The AI rollout is happening now, prematurely, with no real plan from the companies deploying it.

But AI isn't a thinking, conscious being, autonomously deciding to make these choices. So next, the who. AI is purposefully characterized by the billionaires as something too complex to understand, almost of a mystical quality. This is an intentional ploy to evade blame and continue

So who's in control of this powerful technology? It's just five billionaires, together worth well over $1 trillion. Contrary to the view of the pessimists, AI isn't the thing on a runaway quest for power—it's Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg. And contrary to the view of the optimists, more advanced AI technology isn't the barrier between us and a scarcity-free, liberated world. It's the capitalist system and the billionaires who run it.

The Future Of AI

So, where do we go from here? The director concludes that he chooses to be an "apocaloptimist"—to find a path between the promise and peril towards a world where AI is regulated and retooled in a useful way.

He calls for a laundry list of solutions: from calling our congresspeople to pass more regulations, to joining our school boards, to getting a job in AI to work on AI safety. While these on their own are fine things to do, they don't take aim at the key problem: the system that drives for profit over human need and the tech billionaires in power who profit the most.

Only in a socialist society can we achieve true international cooperation based on the needs of ordinary people. AI can, and should be, used for good—from new drug discovery, to shortening our work week so that we can enjoy free time, to eliminating mundane tasks. But this will never happen with this technology in the hands of the billionaires, whose use of AI creates more deadly wars, more climate catastrophes, more targeting of immigrants, and more wealth inequality. The existential threat we are facing right now is not actually AI—it is capitalism and those who serve it.

We need mass struggle against capitalism and the billionaires. This means opposing the construction of water-guzzling data centers and the right wing's drive back to fossil fuels. We need to fight against job cuts with the creation of good union, green jobs. Jobs that face cuts in hours should be compensated with full pay. Instead of massive investment in AI, we need to take the top 500 companies into public ownership, including big tech and the banks that serve them, to fund education, housing, and healthcare. ✪

JOIN SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

Socialist Alternative is in political solidarity with revolutionary socialists all around the world fighting in our workplaces, communities, and schools against the exploitation and injustices people face every day under the global capitalist system.

We don't just talk—we organize and fight to change the world. We build protests and walkouts. We organize unions and strikes. We fight for the program contained in our newspaper Socialist Alternative, written by our own members.

We led struggles in Seattle that won the country's first $15/hr minimum wage, landmark renters' rights and a tax on Amazon to fund affordable social housing. Now our members are helping to lead fights of USPS letter carriers to win a $30/hr starting wage and the right to strike.

Every week, we have branch meetings in cities across the country where we analyze events from a Marxist perspective and discuss our work. Trump, poverty, discrimination, war and environmental destruction are symptoms—capitalism is the disease. Join Socialist Alternative today!

Socialist Alternative is part of International Socialist Alternative (ISA). Learn more about ISA at www.internationalsocialist.net

Reach out to us at info@socialistalternative.org!

LABOR MUST STAND AGAINST WAR

END THE WAR.
1199 DAY OF MOURNING
STOP THE KILLING IN VIETNAM
LOCAL 1199
NO WAR WITH IRAN
USA
NO WAR on IRAN!
NO WAR on IRAN

ROB DARAKJIAN, LOS ANGELES

Rob is a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 2902, writing in a personal capacity.

As the threat of continued war with Iran grows, working people are once again being told to prepare for sacrifice while corporations and military contractors prepare for profit. The Trump administration's war on Iran is against the interests of ordinary working people.

Workers in Iran face the constant threat of renewed bombing campaigns and economic devastation. Workers in the United States and worldwide pay the price of war too—through rising costs, cuts to public services, attacks on democratic rights, and the expansion of militarism at home. Meanwhile, the same political establishment that claims there is no money for healthcare, education, or decent wages somehow always finds billions for bombs and weapons contracts. Even if Trump pulls out from Iran, the militaristic interests of US imperialism are far from over—so we need to build real opposition to war.

For the labor movement, opposition to war cannot remain a symbolic or purely moral position. It is a fundamental class issue. War strengthens the power of the ruling class while weakening workers' ability to organize and fight back. Historically, wartime nationalism has been used to pressure unions into accepting wage freezes, no-strike clauses, and tighter labor discipline "for the national interest," while the capitalist class enjoys massive war profits.

Some unions have already spoken out. National Nurses United has warned about the humanitarian consequences of this war, and the AFL-CIO has criticized military escalation. But statements alone are not enough. Labor needs a concrete, militant anti-war strategy rooted in rank-and-file organizing and workplace action.

PRO-WAR MEANS ANTI-WORKER

Imperialist war has always been incompatible with the interests of the working class. During major conflicts, workers are told to tighten their belts for the sake of "national unity," even as corporations profit through military contracts, energy speculation, and wartime production. Public resources are diverted away from social needs and redirected toward militarism. Inflation rises while employers insist workers accept concessions. Anti-war dissent is stigmatized as unpatriotic, and governments expand repression in the name of security.

Imperialist war also undermines the international solidarity workers need to resist exploitation. Workers in different countries do not benefit from killing each other on behalf of competing governments and corporations. The same multinational companies exploiting workers in the US also exploit workers abroad. The same politicians demanding military escalation are also attacking unions, privatizing public goods, and slashing social spending at home.

Historically, labor movements are weakened when they abandon internationalism in favor of nationalism. During World War I, many social democratic and labor leaders sided with their own ruling classes despite years of pledges to oppose war. The result was catastrophic: millions of workers were sent to slaughter each other while the wealthy preserved their power. But history also shows another possibility. Mass worker resistance, strikes, and mutinies played a decisive role in ending World War I.

That history matters today because the labor movement still possesses enormous potential power. Workers make society function. From ports and factories to hospitals and schools, the entire system depends on labor. If workers organize collectively, we can not only protest war, but disrupt the machinery that sustains it.

LABOR MUST ACT

So what can unions and rank-and-file workers do concretely?

One starting point is introducing anti-war resolutions in local unions, labor councils, and national organizations. Resolutions can demand an end to military escalation and oppose US intervention abroad. We can call on unions to organize educational meetings, protests, and workplace actions against war.

Workers should also push unions to move beyond statements and toward action. In recent years, workers have demonstrated the potential of labor struggle to shape broader political fights. Unions and community organizations mobilized against ICE raids and deportations, with the January 23 general strike in Minneapolis putting an end to "Operation Metro Surge." It is this kind of militant action that is needed to challenge militarism.

Rank-and-file pressure is essential to drive action because many union leaderships remain tied politically to pro-war Democrats. These leaders' main role is to secure workplace contracts, while they timidly lay low on most broader political issues, except to occasionally support Democratic initiatives. The labor movement desperately needs political independence—to form a new workers' party we can use as a vehicle for militant struggle, on all issues that affect our class. This means breaking with the corporate-backed Democratic Party.

Workers in all industries must be a part of building an anti-war opposition, but those directly connected to military production and transportation have a particularly important role. If labor is used to manufacture weapons, transport military equipment, or maintain war infrastructure, workers have leverage to organize resistance. Historically, dockworkers and logistics workers have sometimes refused to handle cargo tied to war and occupation. Similar actions could become decisive in opposing an accelerated war drive.

At the same time, labor's anti-war struggle must be connected to the fight against austerity, racism, authoritarianism, and capitalist exploitation. Militarism abroad is inseparable from attacks on workers at home. The drive towards war is part of a wider reactionary agenda rooted in the needs of capitalism—one that targets immigrants, public education, labor rights, and social programs.

The labor movement faces a clear choice. It can remain passive while politicians and corporations push society toward deeper crisis, or it can revive the tradition of militant working-class internationalism. To defend workers' interests, unions must fight not only for better contracts, but against war, against authoritarianism, and against the capitalist system that profits from both. ✪

Want to pass an anti-war resolution in your union?

SCAN HERE
for a template

JOIN SOCIALISTS FOR A SCREENING OF PRIDE (2014)

HATCHER
BIANS & GAYS
THE MINERS
SUPPORT THE MINERS
1984–1985

Based on a true story, Pride (2014) takes place in 1984 when a London queer activist group linked up in solidarity with striking Welsh miners - a brilliant cinematic retelling of the real working-class solidarity needed to fight the oppression of the bosses who run society!

Long after the Pride Parades have been dismantled, the story of Pride remains relevant: now more than ever we need to revive the spirit of the miners' strike and the queer activists who boldly fought back against both Margaret Thatcher and homophobic ideas in the working class.

Capitalism is the root of all oppression, including transphobia, homophobia, and racism. These days, with an emboldened far right, the fight against backwards ideas can feel like we're always taking one step forward and two steps back.

That's why it's so important to build a powerfully united, working-class movement fighting for a complete transformation of society into a socialist one, where there is no more material basis for division and oppression. Only then can we sweep away oppressive ideas-not just a little bit at a time, but for good.

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SAME STRUGGLE SAME FIGHT

UNITE OUR STRUGGLES AGAINST RACISM, TRANSPHOBIA AND CAPITALISM

Join Socialist Alternative for a screening of Pride (2014). Afterwards we'll discuss what lessons are relevant for today's struggles while making signs, buttons, and more materials to march with in a socialist contingent at the 2026 Queer Liberation March!

If you can't make it, join us at QLM directly: the march will gather at 2:30PM at Union Square!

when

Saturday, June 20
4-8pm

where

Boyfriend Co-op
1157 Myrtle Ave, Brooklyn

RSVP

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